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Summer 2018

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Anarchist Summer Reading

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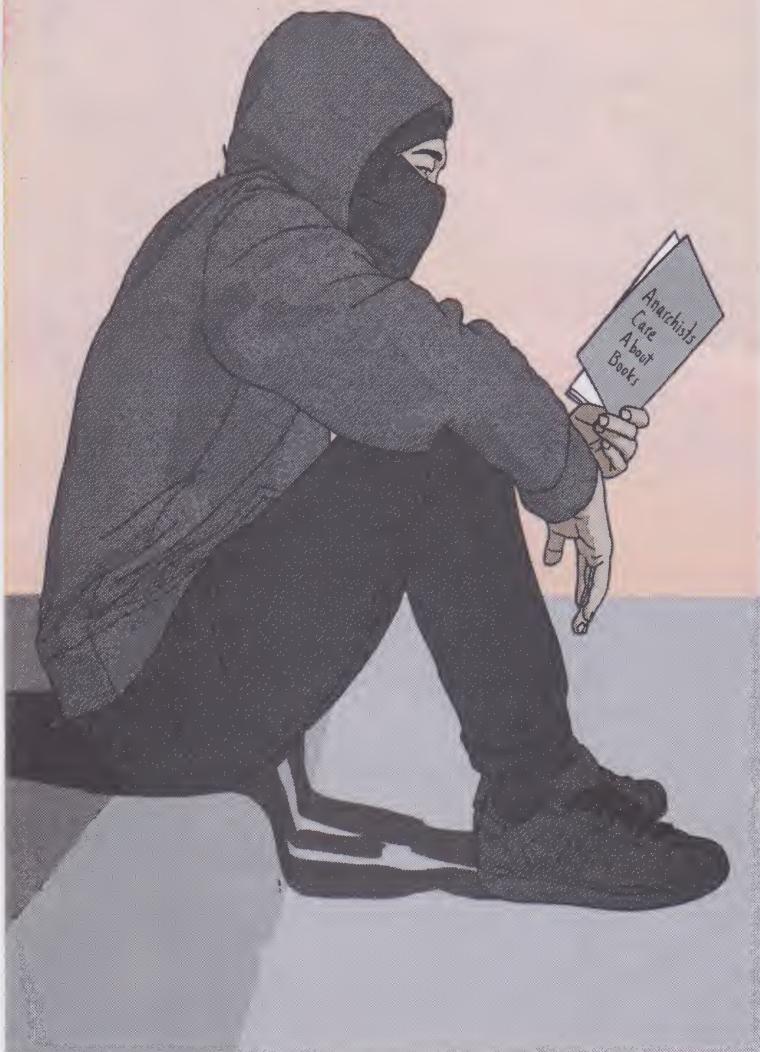


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About this issue

An Anarchist Review of Books



IIt's been said that a revolutionary's first weapon is a book.

When the Fifth Estate occupied a physical office in its first thirty years of existence, it always had a bookstore space where texts supporting ideas we published and stimulated us lined the shelves. The last one, in Detroit's Cass Corridor, car-

ried the name of Ammunition Books and in one listing of our titles used a photo of a .357 magnum pistol as an illustration.

Weaponizing books no longer seems like an appropriate metaphor, but the role of books cannot be underestimated. Literature has always played an important role in revolutionary upsurges, both as analysis and providing visions of a new society.

Some Fifth Estate staffers were fortunate enough to know an old comrade in the 1980s, Atanas Vidloff, who participated in an armed uprising against the Bulgarian government in 1923. After its terrible defeat, Tony Bulgar, as he was known, emigrated to the U.S. and in conversations would tell us, "I have three teachers; Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Tolstoy," and would always add, "No others!"

The writings of these classic anarchist greats seemed to work for him as analysis and vision which propelled him into action to bring about a revolution that would embody them.

Tony and other comrades in the great age of revolutions against capital between 1848 and 1939 may have only needed that short a book list since the workers then did not need print to remind them of their onerous state in life to urge them onto rebellion. Today, capital has triumphed in a manner unanticipated by earlier revolutionaries who believed the new world they carried in their hearts was close at hand.

Now, books take on a greater role in lives that look for social change. We need them to understand the forces of capital, its economy, culture, and administration; we need writing to know that we are not alone, that the spirit of rebellion and refusal to submit exists in movements and by individuals everywhere, and we need them to remember the comrades who came before us, their courage, their vision, and their determination.

Also, to enjoy the pleasure of holding a book filled with a good story or poetry, or one that makes us laugh. To get away from the electronic screens which dominate our lives.

To that end, we are publishing this Anarchist Summer Reading edition. Something we haven't done since 2012.

Someone noted how many reviews we have. Actually, what is printed here doesn't even come close to the number of anarchist-themed books that deserve review and reading. Find them through your independent publisher and bookstore!

Cover photo: PM Press pmpress.org

Graphic this page: 2016 Montreal Anarchist Book Fair poster art. The event is held each May

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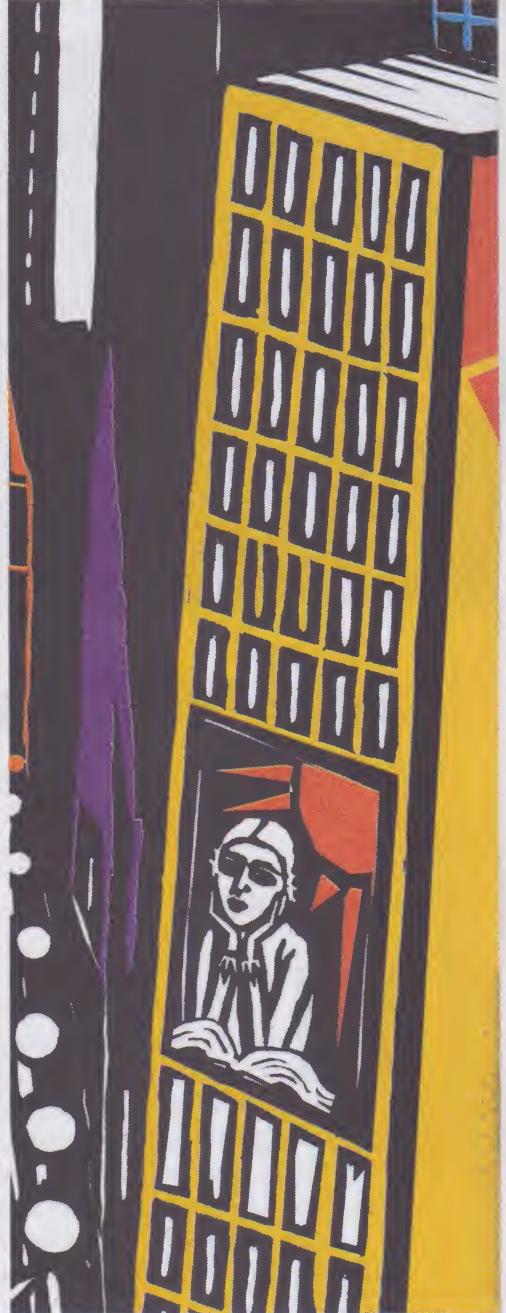
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fifth estate

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Call for Submissions Fall 2018 Fifth Estate

Theme: Anything Can Happen!

This title comes from a 1968 essay by Fredy Perlman when it looked like revolution was close at hand. We want to re-envision the future at a time when everything looks unsettled.

We invite you to submit analytical articles, news reports, essays, poetry and fiction. Before contacting us with proposals or submissions, please read our writers' guidelines at www.FifthEstate.org.

Deadline: September 15, 2018



Anarchists & Guns

“Workingmen: Arm yourselves and appear in full force!”

—1886 Haymarket leaflet

PAUL WALKER

The initial clamor about controlling gun violence following the horrible mass shooting at Parkland, Fla. high school this February mostly subsided following huge demonstrations of students across the country in March and April. Young students appeared everywhere in the media advocating reforms, but no legislation has passed that will staunch the blood flow, and probably none will be forthcoming.

(As this was written, another high school massacre occurred in Santa Fe, Tex., followed by several other smaller ones that quickly disappeared from public attention.)

Liberal policies will do little to stem gun violence, and right wing proposals to arm everybody, led by the increasingly shrill National Rifle Association (NRA), only assures more killing.

Neither approach will successfully combat gun violence in a country steeped in a history of violence, where a third of the population owns 300 million firearms, and political limits constrain lawmakers to, at best, make tepid reforms.

While that mainstream debate continues, those who see the need for defense against a rising right wing current and perhaps for a revolution in a future period are involved in a parallel discussion about arms possession. If you oppose the political state what should be the stance toward legislation that would limit gun ownership and type of weaponry? Formal laws take the place of autonomous action in all spheres of life, providing both a protective and a repressive function. Armed might is the core of the political state. Without it protecting the ruling class and its economic and social arrangements, hierarchical systems from the first slave states to the current capitalist ones wouldn't have lasted long in the face of popular resistance.

However, the modern state mediates some of the worst abuses and natural consequences of an exploitative system. One can assume most anarchists, while opposing the state as an institution, are supportive of laws within the current sys-

tem such as those governing the environment, product and workplace safety, discrimination, speed limits, and crimes against persons, all of which are enforced by the same tyrannical system of cops, judges, and courts which victimize the poor and people of color, and repress expressions of resistance.

It is certain that anarchists and other revolutionaries share a concern about the daily death toll the proliferation of firearms exacts, but the question to consider is, are arms a special and unique category different from air quality regulation or no left turn prohibitions?

Other than the United States, most Western countries have strict requirements regarding weaponry, including ownership, type, usage, etc., resulting in gun death rates up to 90 percent less than that of this country.

All of the liberal proposals for background checks, mandatory gun locks and safes, prohibiting ownership by abusers, and banning semi-automatic assault rifles, if enacted, would probably reduce gun violence somewhat. However, even under that politically fanciful scenario, that would still leave a heavily armed population with a capacity to act out shootings against themselves and others.

When we move to a discussion on our end of things as to what position should be taken regarding gun ownership, a whole different set of concerns come into the equation. It takes place in a context far from the understandable liberal dismay at the repeated mass shootings, one that considers the consequences of a disarmed population unable to protect workers and minorities against a tyrannical government, racist or right-wing mobs, or the ability to defend a revolution.

Historically, anarchists have admired armed revolutionaries, on the European barricades of 1848, at the 1871 Paris Commune, the revolutionary resistance to the Bolsheviks by the Makhnovist movement and Kronstadt garrison, and the most frequently cited example, our comrades of the anarchist militias in Spain who fought both fascists and Stalinists in the defense of the revolution they created in the 1930s.

THE QUESTION HERE IS WHAT WORKS FOR ORGANIZING DEFENSE OF ONE'S SELF AND COMMUNITY AND A REVOLUTION

The John Brown Gun Clubs have been active in meeting armed rightists on their own terms. redneckrevolt.org



In the U.S., African Americans frequently employed armed resistance to white racist terror following the Civil War and into the 1960s. Workers in the coal fields of West Virginia and Kentucky fought cops, National Guard, and company goons to defend their unions or the right to organize in the 1920s. In 1886, anarchist labor leaders called upon their members to "Arm yourselves and appear in full force," at a rally in Chicago's Haymarket Square. Many did, but following a bomb blast and ensuing gunfire that left scores dead and wounded, four anarchists were hanged by the state of Illinois.

HUEY NEWTON, CHAIRMAN OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY in the 1960s, famously urged oppressed black people to, "Pick up the gun!" The specter of armed African Americans confronting brutal urban police forces led to a murderous campaign of repression against the party resulting in the deaths of dozens of Panthers in spectacular shoot-outs across the country, and an eclipse of their non-violent community based programs.

The 1921 so-called Tulsa Race Riot was actually a white mob and police attack against a prosperous African American district. Black World War I veterans and members of the African Blood Brotherhood bravely built barricades to defend their neighborhoods against the marauders.

The resistance against the mobs was so intense that white city officials aerial bombed the defenders, burning the black section to the ground, killing hundreds.

The third aerial bombing of the U.S. (the second being Pearl Harbor) came in 1985 when a Philadelphia police helicopter dropped an incendiary device on the communal living space of the MOVE organization following a pitched gun battle with authorities trying to serve arrest warrants including ones for arms possession. The resulting fire killed eleven MOVE members including five children and destroyed 65 houses. Many of the black liberation group's members remain

in prison serving long sentences. (See article in this issue.)

All of these examples (hundreds more exist) were heroic struggles against oppression and exploitation, yet almost all of them were scenes of great bloodshed and usually defeat of the radical forces pitted against the ruling powers.

The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was originally proposed by its Framers to guarantee states the right to raise militias to suppress slave uprisings and armed white revolts such as Bacon's and Shay's Rebellions. In recent years, its alleged ambiguity has morphed explicitly into a right of personal gun ownership, and increasingly advocated by the NRA to expand an armed population. However, the Framers also saw the necessity for having every white male armed in an era when they had a palpable fear of slave rebellions and Indian attacks. That siege mentality still exists among many whites, particularly ones who are armed.

THE QUESTION HERE IS WHAT WORKS for organizing defense of one's self and community and a revolution if that comes to pass. Just as in day-to-day organizing, we evaluate what works partly by examining the strategies and tactics of past campaigns so we don't repeat the same mistakes. What does this say about the efficacy of arming for revolution or for even community self-defense?

The first line of defense for capitalism and the political state once threatened is the police who are increasingly militarized. The cops of yore did damage enough when armed only a little better than their challengers, but now they possess military grade armaments including tanks and a variety of sophisticated weapons, surveillance, and command capacity.

Were the cops to fail in efforts to halt a mass based movement demanding revolutionary change, the final level of protection of the state is its regular armed forces who could easily overcome any popular-based revolution or resistance. A modern revolution could only occur if sections of the military

joined the revolution.

Regarding defense against fascist threats to our movements on a daily basis, let alone for revolution or even radical reform: We are currently way outgunned. There are ten million AR-15 assault rifles owned by Americans. How many can we estimate are in the hands of, in general, Trump supporters, or narrowing it to extreme rightists and open fascists compared to how many are possessed by anarchists or leftists? The math is not encouraging.

Employing increasingly strident, far right-wing rhetoric, the NRA with its five million armed members, could easily be transformed into fascist militias as happened after World War I when the German Freikorps, a right-wing para-military, was used by the government to suppress revolutionary upsurges.

Currently, on the left, there are small gun groups like Guerrilla Mainframe and the Huey P. Newton Gun Club, which oppose police brutality and advocate for the rights of black gun owners.

Also, there is Redneck Revolt, an anti-capitalist, anti-racist, and anti-fascist group which organizes white working-class people and has more than 33 local chapters, an off-shoot of the John Brown Gun Clubs. They've appeared armed at Trump rallies in the manner rightists have elsewhere. Left groups are all under heavy police surveillance. The co-founder of the two black organizations, Rakem Balogun, was recently locked up for five months without bail on suspicion of "domestic terrorism."

It's hard to say what this suggests doing. We are clearly outgunned both by the state and the right. Should historic defeats encourage us to submit without a struggle? Should we depend upon the state to protect us from rightist assault? The answers to these questions are obvious.

HARDER QUESTIONS ARE, SHOULD ANARCHISTS OPPOSE ANY RESTRICTIONS on gun ownership other than background checks, or even that? Should we see the Red Neck/John Brown Gun Clubs as a model of armed resistance against an increasingly crazed right wing which has no debate about the issue of guns?

In answering this, we should be aware that there will be 35,000 U.S. gun deaths in a given year with 100,000 people wounded. If anarchists were as armed as are current gun owners, would we be any safer from murdering one another, taking our own lives, and shooting others accidentally? Probably not. (Full disclosure: I own three weapons, and do not want to surrender them.)

However, revolution has always been an undertaking filled with risks and the future is uncertain as to what will occur as this country's politics get crazier. It's been said that we should have a big tool box, one which includes a multitude of resources of which guns at a particular time could be useful ones.

Most revolutions are thought of as extremely violent events, but the act of revolution by itself, the wheel turning over the old society and bringing the new one to the top, is usually fairly non-violent. In Russia and Spain, for instance, revolutionary ideals supplanted the conventional norms of capitalism and the state as workers and peasants simply began life without bosses and cops. It was the defense of those new forms in which so many lives were lost.

No one from the *Fifth Estate* offers advice as to whether gun possession is appropriate or not, and certainly not this writer. The most appropriate tools are those which have always led towards revolution—organizing around greater freedom, protecting those most at risk from racism, sexism, homophobia, and xenophobia, supporting struggles in the workplace and the community, and subverting loyalty to the empire, its military, and its wars.

Once we see where this has brought us, it will be an organic process of deciding the best means of defense.

Paul Walker is a long time friend of the *Fifth Estate* who lives in the Detroit area.

Support still needed for those arrested at Trump's 2017 Inauguration

J20 Trials Continue to Drag on

ANONYMOUS

B By the time this is published, the J20 trials, the prosecutions of protesters mass arrested at Trump's inauguration in January 2017, will likely be in full swing.

Despite having charges dismissed against 129 of the 230 people indicted and the first trial resulting in unanimous acquittals for six defendants in January, the US Attorney's office has doubled down on its year and a half long legal effort to prosecute the 59 remaining defendants.

The 59 are those who the government claims to have specific evidence against that they either destroyed property, organized the demonstration, or knowingly engaged in black bloc tactics. The cases against these individuals will be tried in groups of five and six through October of this year.

A major development in the case was a filing by the US Attorney that government wanted to call as a so-called expert witness, an FBI agent who spent two years in "an undercover capacity" infiltrating an "anarchist extremist group" in New York City from 2008 to 2010.

During that investigation, the agent participated in a black bloc action dur-



ing the 2009 G20 meeting in Pittsburgh. The expert status designated is supposedly based on her undercover experience and "study" of black bloc tactics.

Court filings report that the agent receives monthly trainings on "domestic terrorism" that include discussion of black bloc tactics. In addition, she receives daily and weekly updates on "domestic terrorism operations" which includes "extremist individuals and groups in the anarchist and anti-fascist movements."

In the latest example of overreach on the part of the US Attorney, the government moved that the witness be allowed to testify under the alias, "Julie McMahon." The US Attorney argued that disclosing her full name would impact her capacity to work undercover in the future and might compromise ongoing investigations.

WHILE COURT FILINGS INDICATE THAT THIS WITNESS is not presently engaged in active investigations, the US Attorney argued that her identity should be kept secret. Among the justifications was that other witnesses, including an undercover officer and the lead detective in the case, had been photographed by the media and their images have been disseminated online. This is a rather ironic concern given that the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) provided a list of names of all those arrested to an alt-right news website which facilitated the doxxing and harassment of those arrested.

After challenges from J20 defense attorneys, the judge hearing pre-trial matters denied the US Attorney's request to keep the identity of the expert secret and placed significant restrictions on what the witness could testify to in court given that she was not at the inauguration.

In response, the government unexpectedly filed to postpone the trial. The U.S. Attorney's office argued that in feedback from the first trial that ended in acquittal for J20 defendants, jurors indicated that expert testimony might have bolstered the prosecution's case

One of 230 arrested at Trump's inauguration.



"This case is a political prosecution and is about much more than the handful of broken windows."

and that they needed more time to find a suitable expert. The court granted continuances for both the trials that were set to begin in April, with defendants' court dates being rescheduled for later in 2018.

Other recent developments make it clear that this case is a political prosecution and is about much more than the handful of broken windows that are repeatedly invoked by the prosecution. It fits into a larger context of political repression directed towards anarchists stretching back to the Green Scare prosecutions of the 2000s, and to those experienced by anarchists in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

A COMMON LINK TO THIS HISTORY of repression is the fact that the government has sought to introduce evidence indicating that the defendants' involvement in the anarcho-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is relevant to the case.

Several of those still facing trial are IWW members and the US Attorney has sought to use that affiliation, as well as evidence showing involvement gleaned from seized cell phone communications, against them.

The government is attempting to criminalize basic political organizing and is re-framing it as evidence of a criminal conspiracy. Routine political activity, including organizing and attending pre-protest planning meetings, producing flyers, appearing on podcasts, and engaging in discussions on email listservs, are being used to argue that the defendants engaged in a conspiracy to riot.

While conspiracy laws are notoriously vague and easy for prosecutors to use against defendants, this is indicative of what is most dangerous about the J20 prosecutions. If the government is successful in its efforts to redefine political organizing and militant resistance as criminal conspiracy, it will be emboldened to make mass arrests at protests and target increasing numbers of protesters with felonies with the ultimate goal of stifling resistance.

For updates on the case and to donate to the legal fund, visit defendj20resistance.org.

Anonymous was a J20 defendant whose charges were dropped.

J20 UPDATE: On June 6, a jury acquitted Seth Cadman of conspiracy to riot and other felony charges.

RED-BROWN POLITICS: Anarchists Must Not Take the Bait

BILL WEINBERG

Fascists are seeking to exploit and co-opt anti-war forces in the US, and build support for war criminals like Assad and Putin. Anarchists have a responsibility to reject such overtures and offer solidarity to those resisting in Syria.

Following the chemical gas attack on the rebel-held Syrian city of Douma in April, Trump staged retaliatory air-strikes, and a protest against the U.S. military actions was held in Los Angeles.

The march featured placards displaying portraits of Syrian leader Bashar Assad and slogans supporting the genocidal dictator including, "Assad is protecting civilians; he is not bombing his own people."

Where else have we seen such open support for Assad? At the neo-Nazi rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, that saw deadly violence last August. One figure on the scene was white nationalist David Duke, who proclaimed on Twitter, "Civilized world stands with Assad."

Video clips from Charlottesville show an alt-right mouthpiece, Anthime "Tim" Gionet, more commonly known as Baked Alaska, saying to the camera with his buddies, "Assad's the man, brother! Two chemical bombs would have solved this whole ISIS business!" A sentiment less hypocritical than that of the supposed anti-war marchers in Los Angeles.

There was even overlap between the two rallies. Baked Alaska appeared in

a selfie-video at the anti-war march in L.A. Eventually, some marchers got wise and chased him off, but they do not appear to have been from the ANSWER Coalition, the main march organizers.

There is a definite convergence underway between the anti-war left and the alt-right (or fascist right, to be less euphemistic) around support for Assad—part of a phenomenon termed Red-Brown politics. That is the phrase used by its advocates in Europe: the notion of an alliance between the left and fascism against the liberal order and the West. You do not have to be a supporter of the liberal order and the West to recognize this as an incredibly dangerous idea.

Yet, it has been building for some time. After the first big chemical attack in Syria, at Ghouta in 2013, two prominent figures on the U.S. left made junkets to Syria to express support for the regime: Cynthia McKinney, a former congress member and Green Party presidential candidate, and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, both leading lights of the International Action Center. The IAC is one of several entities on the anti-war left in the U.S., including



ANSWER, to emerge from the Workers World Party (WPP), a Stalinist sect now the foremost stateside purveyor of Red-Brown politics.

The next person of note to make a Syria junket, attending a confab hosted by the Assad regime the following year, was Nick Griffin of the British National Party—the neo-fascist formation that is harnessing xenophobia in the UK.

And various European National Socialist organizations have sent brigades to Syria to fight for Assad.

In 2017, U.S. Congressional Representative Tulsi Gabbard, a Democrat from Hawaii, widely admired on the anti-war left and a prominent figure in Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign, traveled to Syria, where she met with Assad.

The 2016 U.S. Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein also expressed support for the Syrian government, and her running mate, Ajamu Baraka, views Assad very positively. After the dictator's thoroughly controlled pseudo-elections that confirmed his rule in 2014, Baraka hailed this as a repudiation of the West, crowing about Assad's support among the Syrian people, and how the opposition was "fomented" by the "gangster states of NATO." Stein, in an interview later scrubbed from the internet, referred to the Ghouta chemical attack as a "false flag" implying it was the rebels themselves who used the poison gas to provoke Western intervention.

An incipient Red-Brown alliance

is converging on the global stage. One of the key figures calling for such an alliance in explicit terms is Alexander Dugin, a Russo-nationalist ideologue and political guru to Vladimir Putin. Dugin is consciously bringing together supposed anti-war figures in the West with neo-fascists around the idea of supporting despots like Putin and Assad in the name of a “multi-polar world.” He calls for both sides to “put aside anti-communist, as well as anti-fascist, prejudices,” which are “the instruments in the hands of liberals and globalists with which they keep their enemies divided.”

In one telling episode, December 2014 saw an international Duginist conference in Moscow on the “Right of Peoples to Self-Determination and Building a Multi-Polar World,” bringing together various Euro-fascist formations. Participants included a delegation of Americans representing the IAC and United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC), another group in the orbit of the WPP.

Also in attendance at the Moscow confab was a delegation of white nationalists from the neo-Confederate

League of the South!

These same entities which purport to stand up to the alt-right and white nationalists at home were happy to sit down and schmooze with them in Moscow.

This also recalls Jill Stein’s December 2015 junket to Moscow for a conference hosted by Kremlin media mouthpiece *RT*, in which she supped with Putin and Mike Flynn—then candidate Trump’s military policy advisor and later President Trump’s arch-reactionary National Security Advisor.

This same tendency can now be seen entering mainstream discourse. Fox News commentator Tucker Carlson engaged in the same kind of speculation that the Assad regime wasn’t behind the Douma chemical attack that we also heard from supposedly left-wing journalist Robert Fisk. For spewing this denialism about the attack, Carlson, a figure of the right, was praised by Jimmy Dore, a popular video commentator who calls his program “Aggressive Progressive.”

In recent months, Carlson’s right wing cable news show has featured

left-liberal guests such as Glen Greenwald, co-editor of online news site, *The Intercept*, and Stephen Cohen, a Princeton Russian studies professor.

Cohen is featured regularly in *The Nation* magazine where his wife is editor, and has turned the liberal magazine into a vehicle for Russian propaganda, making it a foremost voice for the Kremlin position in U.S. media.

Anti-war and anti-fascist forces in the West are in grave danger of being co-opted by warmongers and fascists. It is imperative that anarchists do not take this toxic bait. As anarchists, it is our job to organize independent of the self-appointed anti-war leadership, and to work to build an alternative.

An anarchist alternative would be ruthlessly single-standard in its opposition to war—which means saying no to Assad and Putin as well as Trump, and offering solidarity to the anti-authoritarian currents in the Syrian Revolution. Not betraying them by acquiescing with their oppressors.

Bill Weinberg blogs at CounterVortex.org

inside
Havana’s
new
anarchist
social
center.



NEW SOCIAL CENTER OPENS Anarchism Returns to Cuba

The Anarchist Social Center and Library (Abra: Centro Social y Biblioteca Libertaria) was inaugurated in Havana on May 5.

The first word in the Spanish name, *Abra*, means a place or action through which possibilities can be opened up, which is

what the center hopes to be.

Anarchists have been present in Cuba since the 1870s, suffering periodic repression under several different authoritarian regimes. From 1959 on, the Castro government persecuted, imprisoned, and killed anarchists, forcing large numbers into exile or silence—something neither the Spanish colonialists nor the earlier Cuban dictators could accomplish.

Over the last decade, the Cuban government has loosened its regulation of non-governmental groups, opening up possibilities for social activism resulting in the rebirth of the anarchist movement on the island.

The Alfredo López Anarchist Workshop (Taller Libertario Alfredo López—TLAL—named for an early 20th century Cuban anarcho-syndicalist) along with other groups began collecting funds to purchase a space where they would not have to worry about landlords.

In 2012, the TLAL was joined in this effort by the Cuban Critical Observatory (Observatorio Crítico Cubano), Forest Protectors (Guardabosques) and interested individuals.

Supporters in Europe and North America helped by spreading word of the Cuban project and running effective crowd funding campaigns. Later in May there was a benefit evening of poetry and music in Montreal for the center. >>>>

In a recent Web posting on guardabosquescuba.org/, Isabel Díaz Torres, one of the authors of a 2016 FE article, notes,

"After almost three years of international campaigns to obtain the necessary funds—without resorting to grants from foreign governments, political parties, or NGOs, much less to Cuban state institutions—we managed to realize a dream...to have a fixed physical headquarters so that the work could be maintained over time.

"We have seen groups in Europe and America—leftists, trade unionists, anarchists, socialists, alter-globalists—who have their own spaces. Some squat, others rent. There they can express their creativity and direct defiant energies toward transforming a world that is increasingly xenophobic, racist, consumerist, unfair, and exploitative.

"Some of our own struggles can be like theirs, others different; but it is clear that nothing can substitute for direct contact, the transparent gaze of people who want to move something together. Especially in Cuba, where state control of the media is so tight, and the Internet is still so expensive and slow" (FE staff translation).

Abra founders are committed to making the Center open to all who come to the door with dreams and ideas of autonomy and collective work, in order to give life a new meaning.

As part of widening and strengthening their movement connections, in 2015 the Cuban comrades became part of the group that founded the Anarchist Federation of the Caribbean and Central America. The Federation has held annual conferences.

The reactions of Cuban communist authorities to the anarchist revival are not predictable, but the creativity and determination of our comrades in Havana give reason for encouragement and hope for the growth of liberatory projects and ideas.

The need for funds to help keep the Center alive is ongoing. Watch these pages, and Bill Weinberg's countervortex.org postings for news and ways you can contribute.

For a discussion of the new anarchist initiatives see "We Want to Revive Anarchism in Cuba" in *Fifth Estate* #395, Winter 2016, and "The Anarchist Alternative in Cuba" in *Fifth Estate*, #399, Fall 2017, available in print and online at fifthestate.org/archive.

All *Fifth Estate* articles about Cuba going back to the 1960s, and accounts of recent staff visits to the island, are available online at fifthestate.org; type Cuba into the Search box.

Breaking the Cycle of Trauma

Creating a New Lineage of Healing



BENJAMIN OLSON

Trauma is a subtle dominator of experience. Totalizing yet imperceptible, the massive mental shock re-contextualizes life so fully, one forgets what life was like before it.

Indeed, one forgets that there ever *was* a before. War, mass shootings, rape, famine, can all cause trauma. In fact, sometimes just hearing about these things (living with a loved one or being raised by a parent who once experienced them), creates its own trauma in the listener, causing a cycle

that can intensify over generations.

The cycle can be broken, however, and the key to healing is to break trauma's greatest strength: its silence.

As an example, for the past two decades or so, there's been steadily growing public discourse by indigenous people in Canada about the traumas they endured at the government-funded Indian residential schools, which,

from 1876 to 1996, kidnapped 150,000 aboriginal children in an effort to domesticate and assimilate them into dominant culture.

The schools were designed by the Canadian government for assimilation, but also as a component in opening Indian territories for exploitation by forest and mining companies. At least 6,000 kids died at the schools administered by religious orders. Countless others took their own lives after returning home.

In the last decade alone, several residential school memoirs have been published detailing stories like those of Augie Merasty, a Cree trapper from Saskatchewan, whose book, *The Education of Augie Merasty*, details his physical and sexual abuse at the hands of Catholic missionaries at a residential school, and his subsequent alcoholism.

Merasty and other authors and activists seek to interrupt a transmission of trauma that has infected generations of families dating back to the first run-ins with colonization on Turtle Island. The psychic wounds of trauma survivors are sub-consciously communicated to their children, who in turn inherit their parents' unprocessed grief. Simply experiencing a caregiver's constant mental anguish can leave its own scar on a child. The same is true for the survivors of the residential schools, and their descendants.

Psychologist Dori Laub describes trauma as a frozen experience, "automatic and purposeless, bereft of meaning." Scholar Cathy Caruth writes that the inability to process the traumatic experience is a paradox: "the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it." The threat is recognized by the mind "one moment too late," as it were, creating an endless feedback loop.

THE EXPERIENCE IS RECREATED MENTALLY, amplified, but warped into such a low frequency that the sufferer may not even hear it. The signal becomes the background of all other experiences; the context for life; an existential prerequisite.

According to psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk, in the book, *Traumatic Stress*, such an experience is retained and forgotten at once. To remember, that is, to hear it in all its shattering ever-presence, would be to change its very nature.

In response to trauma, we tend to develop compulsions, which serve to reestablish the lost control. As psychologist KL Dykshoorn shows in her essay, "Trauma-Related Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder," there is a high prevalence of OCD in trauma victims. The compulsive behavior follows the cycle of the feedback loop. Responding to an imperceptible frequency of abstracted terror, the sufferer may go through all manner of compulsions to make it stop, without ever realizing it's there.

The human activity of domestication—our domination of the wild material of the world—can be understood as an obsessive-compulsive behavior linked to intergenerational trauma.

From Neolithic times, agriculture and domestication took root when humans "purposefully isolated domestic plants



Domestication—our domination of the wild—can be understood as an obsessive-compulsive behavior linked to intergenerational trauma.

from natural ones, the moment we captured beasts from their homes in the wild and corralled them into human-built enclosures," as eco-psychologist Chellis Glendinning puts it in *My Name Is Chellis & I'm In Recovery From Western Civilization*.

GLENDINNING IDENTIFIES AGRICULTURE as the "original trauma," a severance of human life from active participation in the natural world, beginning with domestication of plants and animals, and intensifying with large-scale civilizations into today's mass technological society.

But domestication isn't just the original trauma; it's also a compulsion in response to trauma, both responding to and recreating the event that made us decide we had to rely on agricultural practices in order to survive, that the earth could not be trusted to provide for us.

Though Glendinning admits "[n]o one fully understands" why we originally started domesticating in the first place, she offers a theory posited by geoarchaeologist Fekri A Hassan that global climatic change altered the planet's growing patterns, forcing humans to "improvise more consciously managed livelihoods."

Relying on managed gardens meant our previously nomadic ancestors were, for the first time in human history, confined to one area of land. From there, the situation spiraled out of control.

The sedentary lifestyle altered ovulation patterns, contributing to a population surge, which meant expansion, and often warfare or more subtle ways of assimilating neighbors who got in the way.

Just as we had "captured beasts from their homes" to work the land, now we were often kidnapping other humans to

use for their much-needed labor sustaining the gardens. Labor became increasingly specialized, and hierarchical relationships began to develop, causing another branch of suffering.

Needing to be in control only made us realize the extent to which we are not, and recast that as a problem to be overcome with more management.

The transmission of our original trauma occurred forcibly via colonization; not only from generation to generation, but also from group to group, as communities were forced to foist their new way of life onto neighboring tribes.

The original trauma eventually made its way to the so-called New World, where even the children forcibly removed from their parents' care and held in Indian residential schools, violently punished for speaking in their native languages, must have already been living in mental anguish from the traumas passed down from their parents and ancestors.

Glendinning recounts Cheyenne activist Susan Harjo telling her "there are no words in Native American languages" to describe the suffering which "European inheritors of this chronic traumatic stress" perpetrated on them.

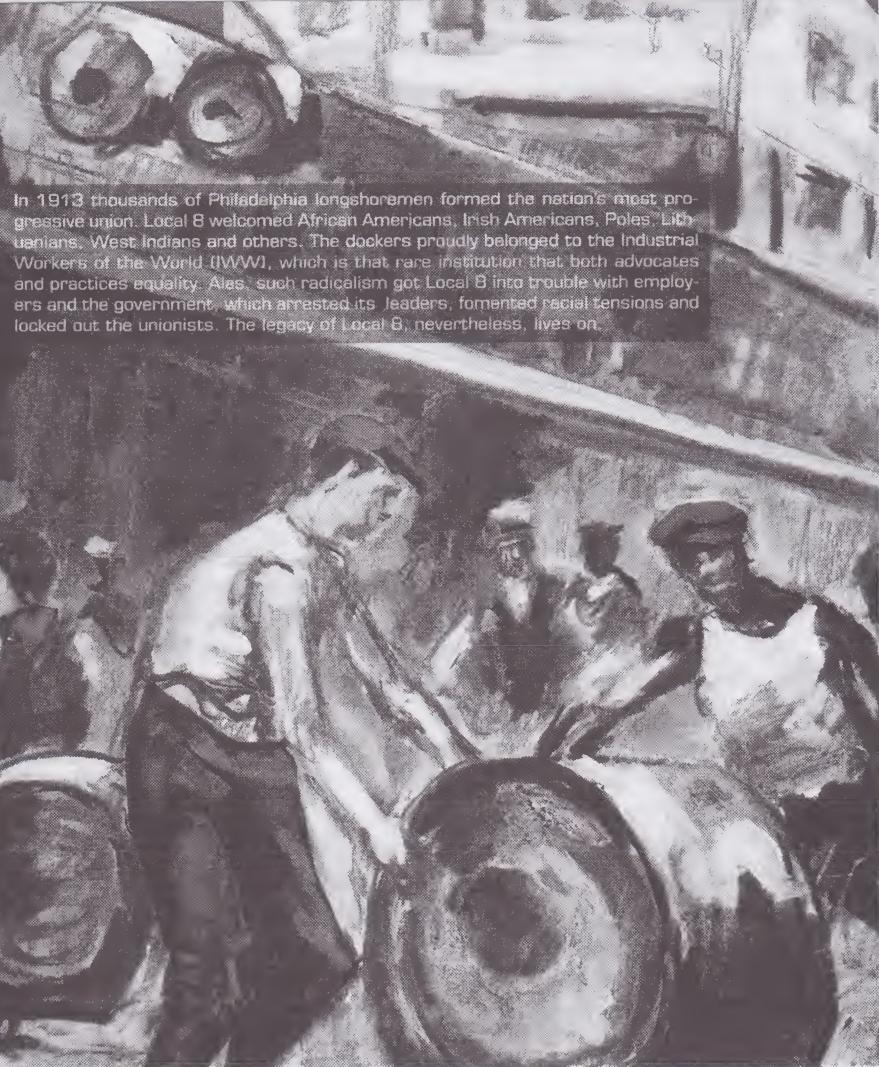
The compulsions of a trauma survivor, while designed to alleviate stress through domination, only recreate and amplify the pain transmission. While meant to ward off danger, they really ward off healing. If we listen for the frequencies of our suffering, as the residential school survivors are doing, we might begin to heal from its negative effects, by recognizing why we are doing it, and learning how to stop.

The current indigenous discourse, despite trauma's choke-hold on language, is a radical rerouting of the trauma transmission, and arguably a radical resistance to domestication.

Recognizing our original trauma and the social compulsion mechanism we built to cope with it, acknowledging the horrors it causes through hierarchical relationships, is the first step towards healing.

It's time to break our cycle of trauma and begin a new lineage based on rewilding and reconnecting to the earth, thereby transmitting and teaching healthy relationships with the world to our offspring.

Ben Olson is a writer and musician in Queens, N.Y. He performs under the moniker Ben Absurdo and is launching an anti-civ record label called Captives Collective.



In 1913 thousands of Philadelphia longshoremen formed the nation's most progressive union. Local 8 welcomed African Americans, Irish Americans, Poles, Lithuanians, West Indians and others. The dockers proudly belonged to the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which is that rare institution that both advocates and practices equality. Ales' such radicalism got Local 8 into trouble with employers and the government, which arrested its leaders, fomented racial tensions and locked out the unionists. The legacy of Local 8, nevertheless, lives on.

IWW Marine Transport Workers Local 8

Black lives mattered in this long-forgotten interracial union

PETER COLE

A

Among the greatest obstacles to a working class revolution in the United States (and beyond) has been, and remains, white supremacy. Far too many white people, past and present, have put their racial identity above their class interests.

A great many white people understand that racism, xenophobia, and other prejudices only divide workers to the benefit of bosses. But the sad truth for the United States is that, before the rise of industrial unions belonging to the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the 1930s, few unions treated African Americans workers equally.

However, one generation prior, a revolutionary union was founded that



Ben Fletcher was committed to overthrowing capitalism and the key to convincing African American dockworkers to join Local 8.

not only challenged capitalism and the state but racism as well. Since its founding in 1905, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) challenged white supremacy. Wobblies, as members of the IWW still are affectionately known, included syndicalists, anarchists, and even some socialists who believed the proper path to revolution was a General Strike, not some political vanguard.

The IWW and other syndicalists believed workers' greatest power was their potential ability to shut down production. If striking was the path to victory, then the union needed all hands on deck, even black and brown ones. No questions asked. The true war is the class war, nothing else.

With a philosophy like this one—along with Wobblies' willingness to strike—it was no wonder that employers and governments despised and feared the IWW. Not coincidentally, the IWW was perhaps the only union in North America, in the World War I era, interested in organizing a workforce one-third African American, one-third Irish and Irish American, and one-third East European.

IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY PHILADELPHIA, one of America's busiest ports and greatest industrial cities, thousands of longshoremen labored on both sides of the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. They loaded everything from Stetson hats to Baldwin locomotives. They unloaded raw materials including cotton from the American South and unrefined sugar from Cuba.

Longshoremen (no women worked ships in that era) typically worked long and hard, for low pay, and in life-threatening conditions. First, the hiring process, nicknamed the "shape-up," was detested by workers who understood the system's vicious exploitation.

Since America's industrial cities teemed with countless thousands of young men—fresh off the boat from County Cork or some county in rural Virginia—hiring bosses demanded kickbacks to be selected; alternately, they picked workers based upon race, religion, family ties, and so on.

Once hired, they sometimes worked thirty-six straight hours for "the ship must sail on time." Even without the dangers caused by tiredness, work was incredibly hazardous. At any moment, a longshoreman could fall down a hold or have a sling of cargo loaded with several tons of potatoes fall and crush him. Longshoremen usually were poor, primarily because they worked irregularly and even less in the winter. Few lived long lives.

Despite their poverty and oppression—or because of it—dockworkers have a long history of militancy. The collective nature of the work, no doubt, also helps explain why dock-

workers have been unusually likely to strike and unionize. In keeping with this tradition, in May 1913, thousands of Philadelphia longshoremen struck, primarily for raises. IWW organizers quickly lined up members into a branch called Local 8.

Off the bat, Wobblies advocated racial equality. However, instead of just talking equality, the IWW instituted policies to ensure it, including by mandating that every major ethnic group have at least one representative on the union's negotiating committee.

Another key to Local 8's success was the leadership of Ben Fletcher, an African American already active in the IWW and Socialist Party. Born in Philadelphia to parents who had moved up from Virginia and Maryland, Fletcher was committed to overthrowing capitalism and the key to convincing African American dockworkers to join Local 8. He became a legend in the IWW.

After several weeks out, with the port shut down, Local 8 won its strike and, over the next decade, the union dominated labor relations. Its members proved willing and able to fight for better conditions and higher wages. They ended the shape-up. Under the new hiring system, employers rang up the union's hall and requested workers. Local 8 enforced its rule not by a contract but, rather, by demanding all workers pay monthly dues that entitled them to that month's work button.

If an employer hired someone not wearing the right button, the rest of the gang was supposed to walk off the job. It is impossible to know how many "quickie strikes" occurred, but they were a staple of the Philadelphia waterfront in this era, as they had been on and off ships for centuries. As a result of the members' fierce commitment, Local 8 remained strong.

BEYOND WINNING RAISES and improving work conditions, Local 8 also insisted upon racial equality. The union integrated work gangs as well as meetings, socials, and leadership positions—all unprecedented on the Philadelphia waterfront and nearly every other American workplace in the U.S.. Fletcher was nationally renowned for his speaking abilities (including at least one tour of Canada) and as the best-known black Wobbly. Local 8 also cultivated numerous other African American leaders.

Despite years of powerful presence on the waterfront, few have heard of Local 8 for a reason: it was crushed, for it and the IWW had amassed a great many enemies. Employers never accepted Local 8's power, so used World War I, hand-in-glove with the federal government, to eliminate the radical union. In 1917-18, Congress and President Woodrow Wil-

son used the war to crack down on Wobblies, Socialists, and other radicals—many of whom opposed the war.

The US Department of Justice arrested Fletcher and five other Philadelphia Wobblies on charges of “espionage and sedition,” along with several hundred other Wobblies, nationwide. Fletcher eventually was sentenced to 20 years in the federal prison at Leavenworth, Kansas as were many other Wobblies.

While Local 8 survived, newer leaders proved less capable. A huge strike in 1920—Involving more than 9,000 workers—belonged to a post-war spate of labor militancy that failed in its primary objective, the 8-hour day. Finally, in 1922, employers locked out Local 8 and, with winter coming, broke its hold.

Worse, employers successfully exploited growing ethnic and racial divisions in the nation (the Klan had millions of members in the 1920s), appealing to specific groups (Italians, Poles, etc.) to take the jobs of their fellow black workers. Whereas, previously, Local 8 withstood this tactic, but it couldn’t in 1922.

In the late 1920s, the more conservative International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA), part of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), brought unionism back to the Philadelphia waterfront. Unlike most AFL unions, the ILA accepted blacks though generally segregated them and treated them “second class.”

In Philadelphia, though, the ILA could not wipe away the legacy of the IWW nor ignore the reality of thousands of African American longshoremen; hence, locally, a more equitable sharing of leadership existed. Still, the ILA tolerated (arguably welcomed) the return of the shape-up and segregated work gangs.

Today, the history of Local 8 and Ben Fletcher is largely unknown, yet he was among the most important African American labor organizers in US history. Local 8, the union he helped found and lead, was almost certainly the most inclusive labor union before the CIO, itself quite influenced by the legacy of the IWW. And their motto lives on: “An injury to one is an injury to all.”

Peter Cole is a professor of history at Western Illinois University, and author of *Wobblies on the Waterfront: Interracial Unionism in Progressive-Era Philadelphia*. His book *Dockworker Power: Race and Activism in Durban and the San Francisco Bay Area* will be published in late 2018.

Ramona Africa speaks in rural, small towns

On A MOVE In Maine

“MOVE’s work is to stop industry from poisoning the air, the water, the soil. And, to put an end to the enslavement of life—people, animals, any form of Life.”

—MOVE Statement

ROBCAT



I am driving south on Interstate-295 in a freezing April rain toward Portland, Maine. In the car with me are Ramona Africa and Fred Riley of the black liberation organization, MOVE. We pass an SUV that has slid off the highway into the ditch.

Our destination is the Space Gallery for the last event of a three-day speaking tour where the “The MOVE Documentary” by Cohort Media will be screened. Ramona and Fred will speak and answer questions following the film. Similar events were held in the Maine small towns of Waterville, Rome, and Belfast. The MOVE speakers received a surprisingly good turnout in rural and small town Maine with up to 50 people at the events, many of whom made generous donations for the group’s support.

The tour is organized by Maine anarchists to raise awareness and funds for the MOVE Nine political prisoners. It’s their 40th year behind bars.

MOVE surfaced in Philadelphia during the 1970’s. Characterized by dreadlock hair, the adopted surname “Africa,” and an uncompromising commitment to their beliefs, members practiced the teachings of founder, John Africa, which included a deep respect for all living things. By 1974, MOVE appeared in public with increasing frequency demonstrating at zoos, pet stores, fur stores, political rallies, public forums, and media offices.

Under Mayor Frank Rizzo, Philadelphia had one of the most brutal police forces in US history. In response, MOVE launched continuous demonstrations focusing attention on police abuses. After years of police harassment and beatings, including a baby being crushed to death by a cop and several pregnant women miscarried due to beatings, MOVE decided to do an armed demonstration in front of their residence.

IN RESPONSE, THE POLICE OBTAINED A COURT ORDER requiring MOVE to vacate their communal household. This led to the city blockading the area, shutting off their water, and trying to starve out the occupants.

On August 8, 1978, the police attacked MOVE headquarters. MOVE members were in the basement, which was flooded with fire department deluge guns. Babies and animals had to be held up to keep them from drowning. This was a major military operation under orders from Rizzo.

The police began shooting into the house and a cop was shot from behind by friendly fire. MOVE was trapped in the basement, six feet below

MOVE NINE



ground. When they finally came out of the house, Delbert Africa was severely beaten, all nine adults were arrested, and the children taken by authorities. The MOVE Nine were sentenced to 30-100 years each for killing the cop that everybody knows they did not, and could not commit.

In 1985, the police obtained arrest warrants on a series of charges against MOVE members, evacuated the row houses surrounding the MOVE house, and launched another military assault. The FBI and Philadelphia police fired over ten thousand rounds of ammunition into the house before finally dropping two C-4 bombs from a helicopter, killing six adults and five children.

Maine anarchists first came in contact with MOVE in 1995

Alt-right on the Run After East Lansing Antifa Action

But antifascist comrades need our help!

CODY CONSTRUCTOR

For those curious whether Antifa tactics can actually deliver the goods when it comes to disrupting fascist organizing efforts, the activity surrounding white supremacist Richard Spencer's early March visit to Michigan should serve as a resounding, "Yes!"

The alt-right leader, who heads the racist National Policy Institute and wants to turn the U.S. into an exclusively white ethno-state, canceled the

remaining dates of a college campus speaking tour after being confronted by a militant antifascist presence during a stop at Michigan State University in East Lansing.

Fighting broke out March 5, when 500 protesters, a mix of both militants and more liberal demonstrators, confronted 40 white power scumbags

when we traveled to Philadelphia for MOVE events and demos. In 1996, we brought them a truckload of organic vegetables in an act of solidarity.

We were attracted to MOVE's beliefs, especially their Earth/Animal liberation, anti-technology, and anti-prison work, and distributed MOVE's First Day newspaper in Maine. Along with comrades from New Hampshire and New Jersey, we fought to get the Earth First! Journal staff to list MOVE prisoners on their Prisoner Support page. It took many angry letters to get it to happen.

We make it to the Portland event despite the weather. The event is well attended, with enthusiastic, generous people interested to learn more about MOVE.

The MOVE family has never backed down from fighting this system. Their fight is our fight.

More information about the group and MOVE political prisoners, visit onamove.org.

Read the book, *25 Years On The MOVE*.

Travel to Philadelphia, August 5-11 to demand the release of the MOVE Nine; info on their web site.

Robcat homesteads and does prisoner support work in Maine.



Fighting got serious as antifa stopped white power in East Lansing, Mich. in March. Above, neo-Nazi Matthew Heimbach of the Traditional Workers Party (rt) looks worried.

walking towards a college building to hear Spencer's racist blathering. Police arrested both fascists and their antifascist opponents on a variety of misdemeanors and felony charges. Although 150 tickets were sold for the event, only about three dozen people actually showed up for Spencer's racist dog and pony show. >>>>

The previous day, attendees of a related alt-right conference taking place in Detroit suburbs were forced to scramble when two venues, the Carpathia Club in Sterling Heights and Tipsy McStaggers in Warren, canceled their events after the Foundation for the Market Place of Ideas sponsoring the get-togethers was publicly exposed as a white nationalist organization front group.

Kyle Bristow, a right-wing lawyer representing Spencer in his legal efforts to force MSU to allow his event on the university campus, distanced himself from the alt-right due to negative press coverage and quit as the director of Foundation for the Market Place of Ideas. Another attorney has taken over a similar lawsuit to let Spencer speak at Ohio State University in Columbus.

Thanks to successful antifa organizing in Michigan, Spencer is now so demoralized that he's admitted he's afraid to show up in public. On a recent video posted to an alt-right YouTube channel, he said, "I don't think it's a good idea for me to host an event that's wide open to the public in which we name the date and the time.

"If we do that in advance," he continued. "antifa are going to do their thing and if the campus police or state police or local police aren't ultimately willing to free up a corridor [to help people get in] then I don't simply want to repeat Michigan."

In other cheery news, the Traditionalist Workers Party, one of the neo-Nazi groups attending Spencer's East Lansing talk, has imploded after its leader, Matthew Heimbach, was arrested in Paoli, Indiana for assaulting his wife and party spokesman David Parrott in a violent incident linked



Thanks to successful antifa organizing in Michigan, Spencer is so demoralized that he's afraid to show up in public.

to what's thought to have been a bizarre lover's quarrel.

While all this is cause for celebration, it's important to remember that antifa people are facing serious consequences for their bravery in taking action to stop Spencer and his fellow fascists. Twenty-four anti-fascist protesters were arrested and 13 face felony charges.

Although \$30,000 has been raised so far to support them in court, all of that has gone to bail and more money is desperately needed to help the M5 defendants (as they're being called after the date of the action) to meet legal costs.

Supporters can donate online at: fundedjustice.com/stop-spencermusu. Those interested in helping in a more direct way should consider holding a local fundraiser to assist the defendants and raise awareness about the fight against fascism.

C'mon everybody, it's time to show our comrades we care!

Cody Constructor is an activist and writer based in Detroit who is down to fight fascists whenever the need arises.

Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons Meet & Rally in Pittsburgh



The Campaign to Fight Toxic Prisons held its third annual conference in Pittsburgh, June 8-10.

It included lectures, workshops, and discussions about the Prison/Industrial Complex's mass incarceration and its links to erosion of environmental health both inside and out.

Workshops ranged from toxic conditions in prisons (such as unsafe drinking water and air), to political repression and resistance inside and solidarity outside, to fighting white supremacy in prisons, support for those with disabilities, queer and trans prisoners, as well as support for undocumented detainees.

The conference was followed by a spirited march and rally protesting the brutally unhealthy and environmentally dangerous conditions in U.S. prisons.

Rally participants new to the movement were also able to connect with organizations supporting prisoners, including prisoner led groups.

Information about Fight Toxic Prisons can be found at fighttoxicprisons.wordpress.com

What are you reading this summer?

Illustration: Alexis Buss

Here are some suggestions among the many books available we found interesting

*W*e put great emphasis on the phrase "the many books available" in our headline since the extent of titles that reflect the anarchist world view are so numerous that even if we were to publish a regularly appearing Anarchist Review of Books, it is

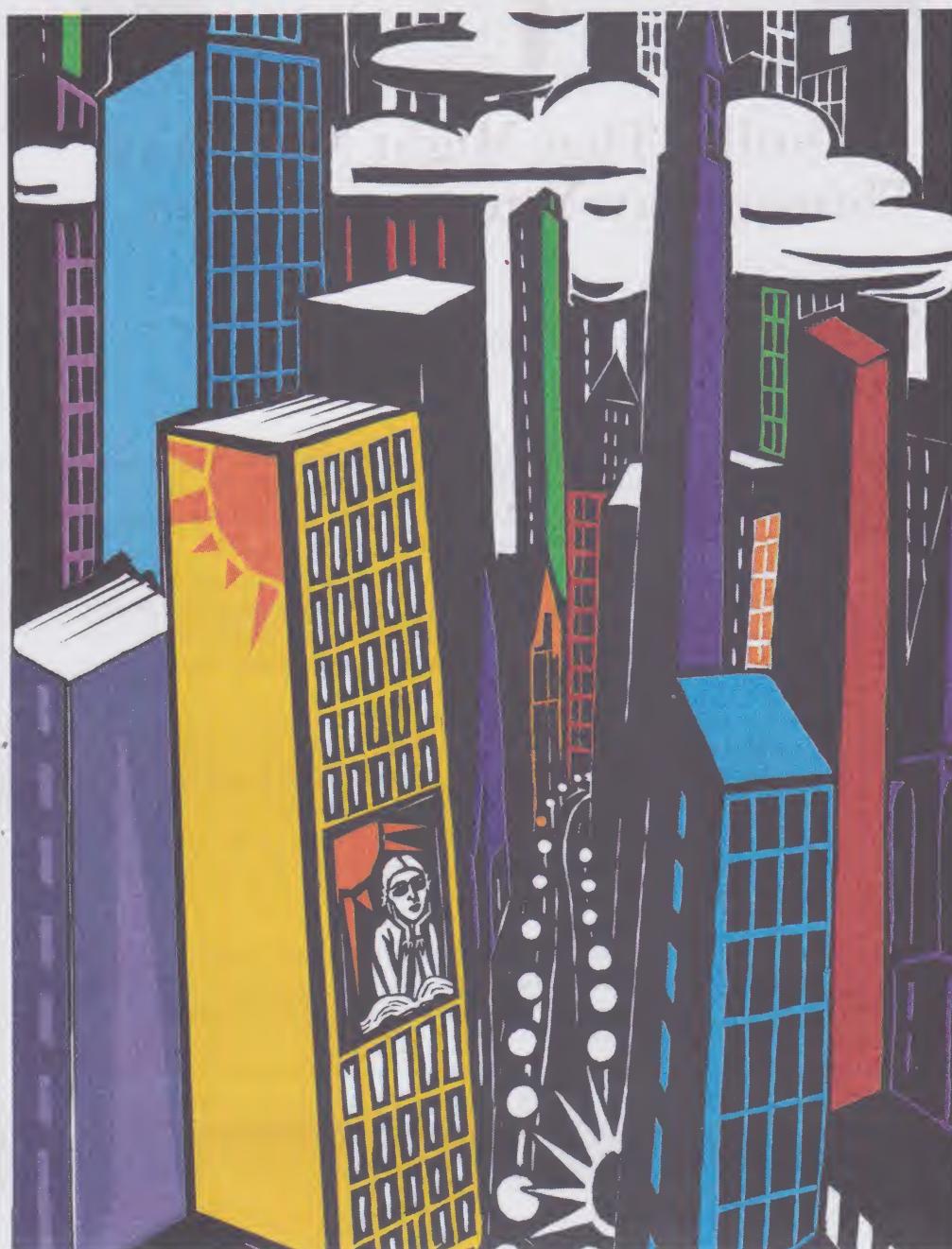
doubtful if we could come close to noting them all.

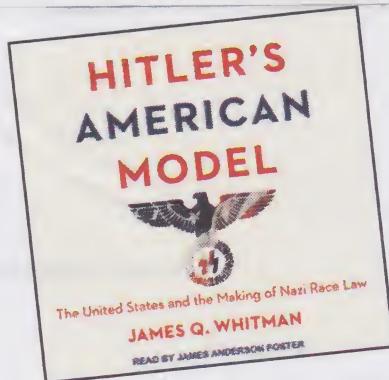
There are many publishers of specifically anarchist literature, but as is mentioned in our article on anarchist fiction in this issue, the desire for freedom without the constraints of the bureaucratic administration of life, and the repression, exploitation, and discrimination inherent in capitalist society, expresses itself in literature internationally.

In a system based on lies, it is of extreme importance to keep alive the anarchist tradition of refusing the world as is, saying no to the false leftist oppositions to capitalism and the state, and put forth an anti-authoritarian vision of the future that we struggle to create.

As in all aspects of our movement and its work, we value autonomy, so we support particularly anarchist publishers and info shops, but also those independent and small concerns that are community oriented. All are extremely important for maintaining the voices and ideas that are excluded from corporate publishing.

Read on!





Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law

James Q. Whitman

Princeton University Press 2017

press.princeton.edu/titles/10925.html

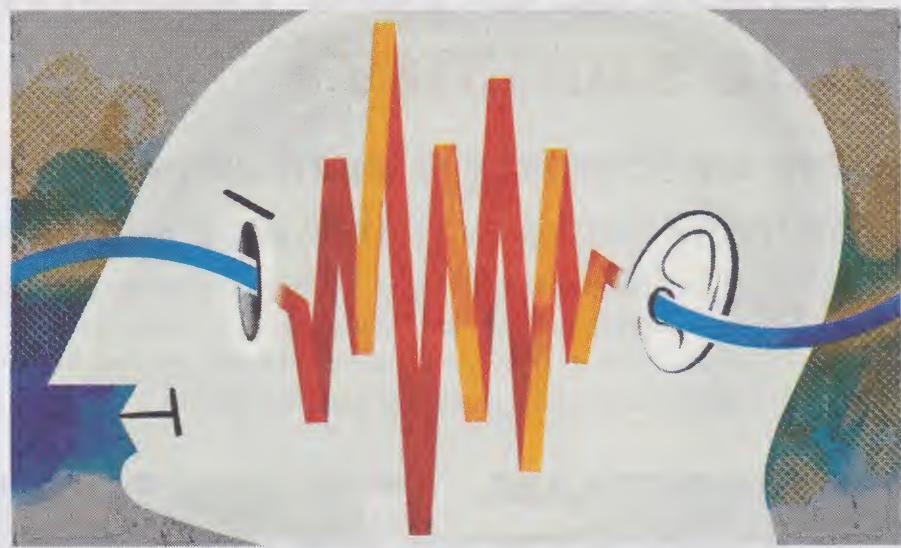
The United States and Germany shared an important characteristic in the 1930s. Both were determined to cement white supremacy into law. Racist statutes in the US were then state of the art. The Nazis sought to catch up after taking power in 1933.

Hitler's 1936 Nuremberg Laws laid the legal foundation for persecution of Jews. Many scholars since have downplayed the importance of America's example, claiming that Jim Crow said nothing about Jews, who were considered Caucasian in the US. Besides, the idea that the USA could be so closely associated with the gas chambers was understandably repellent. James Whitman thoroughly demolishes contentions that American influence on the Nuremberg Laws was "plain wrong" (Mark Mazower), that Jim Crow received only "few and fleeting references by Nazi polemicists" (Richard Bernstein) and was not an "important influence" (Marcus Hanke).

In fact, Nazi legal theorists were very interested in American race laws, and made careful studies of how each state chose to enact them.

They admired direct white supremacist sentiments in miscegenation laws, and understood denial of voting rights. On the national level, they closely parsed the legal language of Congress's anti-Asian and anti-Latino immigration acts. Detailed reports compiling this data were then presented and debated at a 1934 Nuremberg planning conference. A meticulous record was kept, which Whitman cites in depth. Nazi lawyers were obsessed with their American model.

—RB



A Thriller That Might Make You Throw Away Your SmartPhone

Darlingtonia

Alba Roja

Left Bank Books, 2017 akpress.org; albaroja.noblogs.org

RUHE

Darlingtonia begins with a juxtaposition characteristic of the times we live in. Anton works in the service industry in San Francisco, commuting each day into the city because he can't afford to live there and providing concierge services for well-off hotel guests.

He gets through the day by smoking weed and scrolling through his smart phone. On the other side is Dylan, a millennial tech-worker who does graphic design for a multi-billion dollar tech company. She lives in a luxury condo, only occasionally drives her BMW, and commutes daily via chartered buses with other tech workers.

In the first few pages, author Alba Roja (actually, a West Coast writing collective) sets up a scenario that serves as a mirror image of the city's contemporary tech economy. Dylan, the main character, works for OingoBoingo, a fictional company involved in shadowy internet programs which shape the core of the book's action. Like so many people, Dylan moves through life in a repetitive cycle of commuting, working, going home alone to watch Netflix, and constantly checking social media accounts.

HOURS OF HER LIFE ARE WASTED ON INTERNET PLATFORMS, largely observing the lives of others on Facebook and Instagram. She proudly identifies with "her" company, daily turning out new advertisements for its Childhood Memory Game that is played by 400 million users.

The plot centers on Dylan and her process of becoming disillusioned which is accelerated when her co-worker and friend, Ricky, is murdered. This sets off a chain of events in which Dylan first comes to realize the inequality of the world

around her but also how the technology upon the industry's wealth is based is also a deep threat to everyone's freedom. Her only clue is the blossoming of the *Darlingtonia* plant, a flower native to California that feeds off insects and uses nectar as bait.

While a predictable setup for a novel, Dylan's path is unique enough that it never seems stale. She begins to understand the picket signs of anarchist protesters who blockade the tech buses, she responds favorably to posters condemning "Techie Scum," participates in a militant demonstration against her condo building, and even picks up a copy of Nani Balestrini's *The Unseen* from a radical book store. But what really pushes her over the edge is a leaked set of documents showing that OingoBoingo, Google, Facebook, and a handful of other tech companies are working with the government on a secret program called GSX that uses data collected from social media platforms and smart phones to build a comprehensive behavior modification program.

THE REVELATION IS HORRIFIC, but at the same time entirely plausible, enough so that it triggers a widespread backlash with Dylan at the center. Following the disclosure, people turn away from their screens and begin actually living.

You might not have time to notice the feminist quality of the novel's characters given its breathless pace, but there is no male voice of consequence in it other than that of the slain Ricky in flashbacks. Dylan falls in love with an edgy anarchist woman, and Ricky's sisters save the day at the end. Other than their brother, all of the men are bad guys. The emptiness of fashion and beauty as a theme frequently appears.

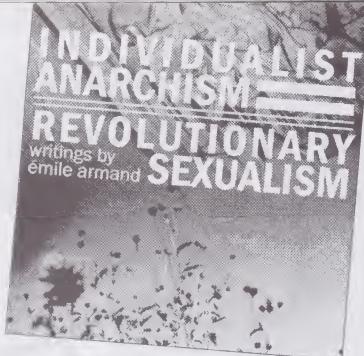
In many ways, the book is reminiscent of Dave Eggers' 2013 novel, *The Circle*, which received mainstream buzz, eventually becoming a film, but didn't spark any kind of broad anti-social networking questioning. While *Darlingtonia* is unlikely to receive such widespread attention, it presents a much clearer and more direct critique in its unambiguous stance against the tech economy.

The optimism of *Darlingtonia* is refreshing and a reader can almost feel this scenario happening at any moment as the book points out the fragility of the tech economy. It raises the possibility that at any moment people might decide to storm the condos of the rich in rebellion against the gross wealth disparities or that the tech economy is one leak away from becoming the subject of public outrage.

Of course, we saw how the Snowden leaks were largely subsumed into a debate over encryption. The recent Cambridge Analytica scandal and Facebook's admission that most user data has been compromised, makes the scenario of a widespread anti-tech backlash like the one described in the book seem increasingly plausible.

Darlingtonia offers a highly readable critique of the technology and digital lives we are told we need to live. The book just might want to make you throw away your smart phone. The characters are well-written and the story is engaging, and succeeds at simply being a good story, avoiding the didactic tendency of much political fiction.

Ruhe is an anarchist in the Midwest who likes to read in the woods while there are still some left.



Individualist Anarchism/Revolutionary Sexualism

Émile Armand

Pallaksch Press 2012 littleblackcart.com/books

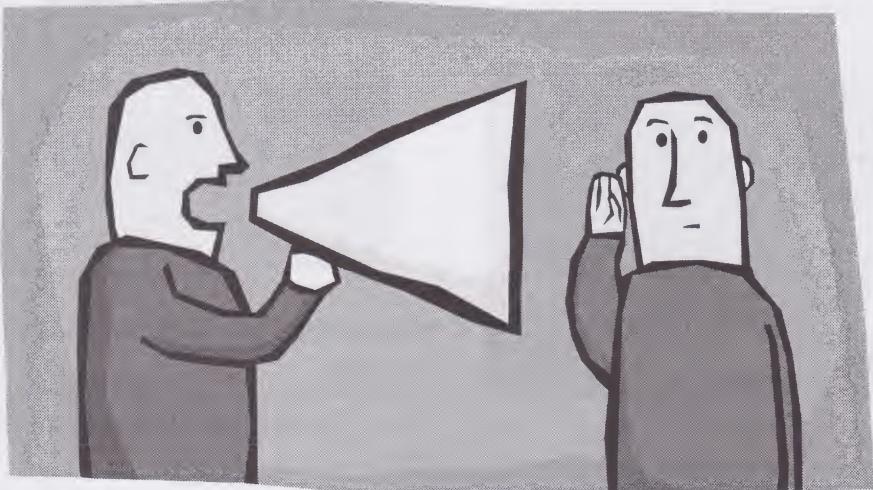
This is a nice selected edition of mostly shorter tracts by the French sex-pol individualist, Émile Armand (1872-1963). Alejandro De Acosta's translations are excellent. Most informative are the essays "Life as Experiment," "The Sexual Fantasists," and "Revolutionary Sexualism."

The gist: life is a series of experiments through which we extend our social, intellectual, and emotional horizon by seeking out or provoking new encounters and situations. Every obstacle that interferes with this project—cops, monogamy, work, etc.—must be overcome or destroyed. This puts our bodies into conflict with the law and with morality, a conflict which has the potential to open us to even greater experiences of freedom and joy.

For Armand, the most insidious controls are those that attempt to take command over, anesthetize, capture, and discipline our erotic bodies. On the question of sexual liberty he does not equivocate: to call oneself an anarchist, but to limit one's "struggle" to economic, political, or intellectual arenas alone, is an "indefensible inconsistency."

If we can't maintain a practice of freedom with our bodies through our intimate relationships, we will remain profoundly compromised in our other commitments and associations: "one may say of a man or a woman that he or she is not liberated, or that his or her liberation is incomplete, when he or she sets up a watertight division between the search for pleasures of the sexual order and the search for pleasures of other sorts."

—Coco Bonobo



Explaining Anarchism to a Parent Can Be Tough!

Anarchy Explained to My Father

Francis Dupuis-Déri and Thomas Déri

Translated from the French by John Gilmore

New Star Books, Vancouver, 2017

STEVE IZMA

A

Any set of ideas whose name defines it in terms of negativity has a lot of explaining to do when it speaks about the future. Proponents of anarchism—in plain English, “against authority”—tend to be adamantly against formulae or against determinism and quite legitimately refuse to describe the perfect, future anarchist society. Nonetheless, anarchism’s critique of oppression leads logically to a set of ideas that explicitly lay down principles for moving forward.

The biggest danger in being positive about ideas is turning them into a catechism-like book of laws, the fate of all organized religions and virtually any entity that calls itself a Party. There certainly have been tendencies towards this within



Piss-Pants and Other Coming of Age Stories

Gary Ives

Proper Publishing, 2018

Print and Kindle, properpublishing.info

In *Piss-Pants and Other Coming of Age Stories*, Gary Ives artfully pulls the reader into each story as he explores teen-aged angst kindled by prejudices attending love, sex, race, drugs, and LGBT issues.

A blind boy listens as his mother is raped; two girls are discovered kissing

anarchism, but Francis Dupuis-Déri’s conversations with his father, Thomas Déri, have intelligently avoided engraving anarchism onto stone tablets.

Anarchy Explained to My Father, even though it sounds like paternalistic counter-paternalism, covers a broad range of political and social critiques in a collegial manner that is in itself a good example of anarchist intellectual explorations. Anarchist expressiveness—in art, song, theatre, and so on—has always enjoyed turning a thing onto its head, and in this case it’s a matter of the younger generation passing on a body of knowledge to the older generation.

Ironically, the son’s broader assimilation of a wide range of topics, such as power, human nature, metaphysics, violence, gender, family, ecology, the state, religion, capitalism, racism, and the future, gives him an authority of knowledge that reverses the conventional flow of ideas. Of course, this kind of authority has nothing to do with coercion; with knowledge comes the responsibility of the author to communicate.

There are many reasons why this book is important to anarchists, but two are especially significant. It’s a modern survey. Every generation of anarchists since Proudhon in the 1800s has produced at least one of these, but this one is truly contemporary, presenting new ideas and, as such, preventing the calcification of old ideas into orthodoxy. Also, the book spends a lot of time discussing process: the need for collaborative dialogue and

and shamed before the entire high school; two boys cope with hemophilia; and a young ship-wrecked sailor finds himself bartered as a sex slave.

These stories and others transport readers to places and events where intense emotions challenge young people on the threshold of adulthood.

—Cordelia Tennyson

Gary Ives’ short story, “This Is BioMorph,” appeared in the Summer 2017 *Fifth Estate*.

decision-making.

The conversational aspect of the text gives it more life than the usual formal explications of anarchism that have accumulated over the years. But conversations also tend to be loose; in this case they're easy to follow and the vast interconnectedness of the above-mentioned topics becomes easier to grasp, at least in a preliminary way. For the minute details, you'll need to consult other books meant to focus more tightly on the items discussed.

This format makes it necessary, then, to move quickly over historical events and controversy. Déri-Dupuis poses "six distinct streams of anarchist thought... anarcho-communism, anarcho-syndicalism, insurrectionary anarchism, individualist anarchism, anarcha-feminism, and anarcho-ecology," clearly stating that he will elaborate his own interpretations of these categories. Quite reasonably, he points out that his father would possibly get very different answers from another anarchist to the same questions. Such a position helps keep the orthodox at bay and warns newcomers to anarchist thought not to get too comfortable.

He gives short shrift to the deeply controversial arguments over the activities of the Black Blocs and Antifa movements, boiling it down to an acceptance of diversity of tactics. Dupuis-Déri has written an entire book on the Black Bloc, but skirts the subject here. He spends more time on historical perceptions of violence within anarchism, but tends to stick to description, which leaves the reader needing to go elsewhere, for example, Mark Leier's biography of Bakunin, which contains an analysis of how the effect of Nachev's violence on mid-19th-century anarchism had consequences still relevant whenever we confront the state's police.

Strangely, the book contains only a brief discussion of anarcho-ecology, since confronting capitalism's attack on the environment takes up more time for many of us than any other issue. This section, with its simplistic approach especially to primitivism as well as to anarcho-ecology's two other sub-currents (deep ecology and libertarian municipalism), ends up as one of the weaker parts of the book.

The book would also benefit from at least a summary of the contemporary anarchist critiques of organization per se, such as in Jacques Camatte's writings. Both father and son make many references to the need for equality within anarchist organizations, but the critique of capitalism and the state would benefit considerably from a look at the inherent tendency towards hierarchy in all organizations.

On the other hand, the book contains a surprisingly long and nuanced debate about religion and atheism. Dupuis-Déri cites numerous examples of religious anarchists and their resistance to authority as well as the statements of many anarchists that belief in a god is incompatible with free will. He's unfamiliar, it seems, with the dominant current in non-fundamentalist theology that poses free will as essential to doing good, with even Pope Francis declaring publicly that his god stands back while human beings make their own decisions on whether or not to act. If nothing else, this demonstrates the basis on which anarchists and religious activists can discuss autonomy and community.

However Dupuis-Déri's conclusion, that "faith should remain a personal matter," should not be interpreted as making belief systems off-limits for discussion and critique. Anarchists need to be wary not only of a mysticism that avoids looking at historical reality but also at strains of fundamentalist materialism, a consequence of the Enlightenment's reaction to the despotism of the European churches.

Marx and his followers enthusiastically developed this materialism into a scientific historical determinism, with the State ultimately taking over the realm of free will. Ironically, some of the most insightful critics of this process use their very anarchistic studies of ancient and modern spiritualities as counter thrusts.

Steve Izma is a member of the Between The Lines Publishing collective and lives in Kitchener, Ontario.



Anarchy on the Air!

The Final Straw Radio

Want to learn how to turn off GPS on your phone? Hear the latest from the pipeline blockade? Or, how to support pipeline resisters near you? The Final Straw Radio (TFSR) is a weekly anarchist radio show and podcast based in Asheville, N.C. TFSR has produced programs since 2010, airing on stations across the country, and offering free downloads at thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org.

Programs feature interviews with anarchists and anti-authoritarians, anti-fascists, prisoners, feminists, eco-defenders, labor organizers, anti-war militants, authors, poets and activists from across Turtle Island and around the world. There are commentaries by anarchist prisoner Sean Swain. There are also irregular tech security features from an anarchist perspective entitled "error451."

TFSR is a member of the Channel Zero Network of English-language anarchist podcasts, (available to stream at channelzeronetwork.com) as well as the International A-Radio Network, which produces a monthly English news show, "B(A)D News: Angry Voices From Around The World" at a-radio-network.org.

Audio comrades in these networks produce an array of news, discussion, story-telling and music shows of interest to anarchists and autonomists.

Contact your local community radio station and ask them about airing TFSR programming. Contact TFSR at thefinalstrawradio@riseup.net if you'd like help with this.

AnarchyRadio

John Zerzan expresses his anti-civilization views on his weekly live show, "AnarchyRadio," from Eugene, Ore., Tuesdays, 7pm PST, on KWVA 88.1 FM. Listener calls wanted at 541-346-0645. Audio streaming at kwva.uoregon.edu.

Archived shows are at johnzerzan.net/radio.

Or, I didn't know that writer was an anarchist

A Brief History of Anarchist Fiction

MARGARET KILLJOY

Without even knowing it, you've read anarchist fiction. There are literary greats like Leo Tolstoy ("The Anarchists are right in everything...They are mistaken only in thinking that Anarchy can be instituted by revolution." ["On Anarchy," 1900]), Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Henry Miller ("[An anarchist] is exactly what I am. Have been all my life." [Conversations With Henry Miller, 1994]), Dam-budzo Marechera ("If you are a writer for a specific nation or a specific race, then fuck you."), Ba Jin, Carolyn Chute, J.M. Coetzee ("What is wrong with politics is power itself." [Diary of a Bad Year, 2007]), Jorge Luis Borges, and William Blake, and other popular fiction authors like Alan Moore, Ursula K. Le Guin, Michael Moorcock, Robert Shea, Norman Spinrad, B. Traven, Kurt Vonnegut, Ethel Mannin, and Edward Abbey.

WIDELY READ AUTHORS who didn't identify explicitly as anarchists have had close ties and sympathies to our cause. William Burroughs wrote *Cities of the Red Night*, a homoerotic anarchist novel. Albert Camus wrote extensively for anarchist papers and used his literary clout to help anarchist prisoners.

Franz Kafka participated in anarchist meetings and demonstrations in Prague and helped found an anarchist journal.

One of Philip K. Dick's first novels was an anarchist story, *The Last of the Masters*. (FE note: as were many other of his novels, several of which were made into films including *Bladerunner*).

George Bernard Shaw, the playwright and novelist, flirted with anarchism early in life before settling as a social democrat and he included sympathetic anarchists in his work and was published by anarchist papers.

[Sci Fi writer] Frank Herbert [author of *Dune*] was intensely critical of government and law and lived on a sustainable land project. Upton Sinclair wrote *Boston* to defend anarchist prisoners, Sacco and Vanzetti. JRR Tolkien wrote his son, "My political opinions lean



Historically, a number of anarchist activists, theorists, & militants have been fiction authors.

more and more to Anarchy (philosophically understood, meaning abolition of control not whiskered men with bombs).

Historically, a number of anarchist activists, theorists, and militants have been fiction authors: Voltairine DeCleyre, Federica Montseny, Fredy Perlman, Eugene Nelson, Joseph Dejacque, Eduard Pons Prades, William Godwin, Louise Michel, and Antonio Penchinet, all wrote fiction in addition to theory, or in addition to taking arms against fascism and the state.

Very few exceptional anarchist novels exist, or at least are widely distributed. By far the most well-known anarchist novel then that passes both of these tests, is Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*.

OTHER NOTABLE BOOKS to portray anarchist societies are Starhawk's *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, PM's *Bolo Bolo*, Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars Trilogy*, and M. Gilliland's *The Free*.

Anarchists have made it in as sympathetic (though often misguided or idealized) characters in any number of books, such as Rick Dakan's *Geek Mafia: Black Hat Blues*, Cory Doctorow's *Someone Comes to Town, Someone Leaves Town*, Wu Ming's *54*, Grant Morrison's *The Invisibles*, and Thomas Pynchon's *Against the Day*.

...[A]narchist fiction isn't limited to portrayals of the societies we envision or the struggles we undergo. What is useful about anarchists writing fiction is just the ability to normalize our world views: non-hierarchy, anti-authoritarianism, egalitarianism, etc.

We can normalize stories told from the working class point of view, and we can normalize people who are usually "othered" by society and [mainstream] fiction.

Reprinted and excerpted from Fifth Estate # 385, Fall, 2011.

The complete article is available at fifthestate.org; tap Archive; go to issue #385

Between issues, visit us at [Fifth Estate.org](http://fifthestate.org), or on Facebook, and register for our email list at fe@fifthestate.org.

Repression & Resistance From RNC 2000 to Trump

Crashing the Party: Legacies and Lessons from the RNC 2000

Kris Hermes

PM Press, 2015 pmpress.org



Protecting the Republicans at their Philadelphia convention in 2000. Cops on horseback attack unarmed protesters. The man with phone seems to be saying, "What are you doing?"

ERIC LAURSEN

C

Crashing the Party was published three years ago, but it couldn't be more timely in the age of Trump and Sessions. Kris Hermes's book is an in-depth account of the legal saga that began with the repression and mass arrests of activists at the 2000 Republican National Convention in Philadelphia.

Much of the groundwork for the hyper-aggressive style of protest policing that's since become common practice, and that reached a new intensity with the outlandish charges against activists at the Trump inaugural, was laid in Philly that summer. Fortunately, it was answered by new techniques of response by arrestees and a renaissance of legal collectives that carry resistance from the streets and police wagons to the jails and courtrooms.

Hermes, who threw himself into the legal campaign for the Philly RNC arrestees as part of the R2K Legal Collective, is an excellent storyteller. He lucidly teases out the many volatile elements that made the convention a powder-keg: the city's extreme cop culture, the seething racial tensions encapsulated by the politically motivated incarceration of activist-journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, the city's splurge of taxpayer dollars to accommodate the orgy of influence-peddling that was the RNC, and the systematic demonization of protesters labeled violent by a compliant mainstream media.

HE DETAILS THE PREPARATIONS BY ACTIVISTS for a national convergence opposing the convention, and the efforts of the city and the national security state to stop them, from illegal surveillance and infiltration to unprovoked raids, to

an extraordinary, secretly negotiated insurance policy immunizing the city from liability for actions such as false arrest, libel, and malicious prosecution.

From the beginning, anarchists were specifically targeted. One affidavit submitted by the police listing organizations tagged for search and seizure included the blanket entry, "Anarchists."

Inside the convention, George W. Bush was anointed Republican presidential nominee. Outside, the city's insurance policy licensed police to engage in a free-for-all of beatings, preemptive arrests, harassment, and mass roundups—420 arrests in total.

While the *Philadelphia Inquirer* editorialized that protesters "acted as if they didn't realize that breaking the law meant you go to jail," much of the police tactics were blatantly illegal. Arrestees were detained sometimes for weeks and charged under a sealed affidavit that was later revealed to contain next to no evidence.

What those arrested in Philadelphia and their fellow activists had going for them was the grim experience gained during the vast mobilization in Seattle against the World Trade Organization a year earlier.

In some detention facilities in Seattle, Hermes notes, WTO arrestees were "dragged across the floor, sometimes through broken glass, doused with pepper spray, hogtied hand-to-ankle, and handcuffed tightly enough to cause bleeding." Some were beaten unconscious.

LATER, REPORTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE (six counts) and threats of rape surfaced. The lack of support shown by the ACLU in Seattle and the efforts of some attorneys to get individual defendants to break ranks are still distressing to read about today. In 2000, they convinced activists of the need to form a legal collective in Philadelphia that wasn't dependent on mainstream liberal organizations.

Also, many veterans of the Seattle actions who were arrested in Philadelphia were experienced at jail solidarity.

Continued on Page 47

The More I Make **LOVE**

The More I Want To Make

REVOLUTION

The More I Make

REVOLUTION

The More I Want
To Make

LOVE



We'll Always Have Paris

It's been fifty years since the exciting events of May 1968 in France that shook the country to its foundations. It is still inspiring to remember the widespread revolt of high school and university students, and then workers, that erupted throughout the country, leading to the largest general strike in French history. These events brought society to a stop, temporarily transforming daily life, and posing the possibility of a complete social revolution. The 1968 turmoil in France was part of a worldwide upsurge.

Although capitalist order in France was eventually re-established, things were never really the same as before. Memories of the challenges to the legitimacy of hierarchies and domination in every realm of life were not so easily obliterated, even though the authoritarians of the right and the left have tried their best to do so.

Many of those who were active in 1968, and who came later to anarchist/anti-authoritarian struggles, are now taking the time to reflect on a moment that has proven to be important and elusive for understanding today's challenges and possibilities.

Looking Back at France, May 1968 The Basic Story

SK

Fifty years ago France was on the verge of social revolution, with millions of workers on strike, factories occupied, and students striking and occupying universities and high schools all over the country. Anarchists and anti-authoritarians were deeply involved in this massive movement which took many, but not all, by surprise.

On March 20, 1968, students from Nanterre University were arrested during an anti-Vietnam War demonstration in Paris. In response, two days later, 150 student radicals occupied the school's administration building, supported by some faculty. This is where the March 22 movement, an eclectic group with significant anarchist participation, came together. During a meeting in the occupied building, they denounced class discrimination in French society and the political bureaucracy controlling the university.

The Nanterre administration called the police. Although the building was cleared with no arrests, some of those deemed to be protest leaders were summoned to the University's disciplinary committee, threatened with expulsion; and the administration closed the campus on May 2 to curtail continuing protests.

As a result, the situation began to heat up. On May 3, students congregated at the Sorbonne campus of the

Looking Back continued on p26

Thoughts on the Significance of France, May 1968

Barry Pateman

One of the most important things May '68 achieved was to make rebellion feel exciting, thrilling, and urgent. People took to the streets of France for a variety of reasons but they took to the streets.

The sounds of laughter as well as anger filled the days and rebellion—and perhaps revolution—moved from the tiresome meeting room and out into the public gaze. Words and deeds were synchronized.

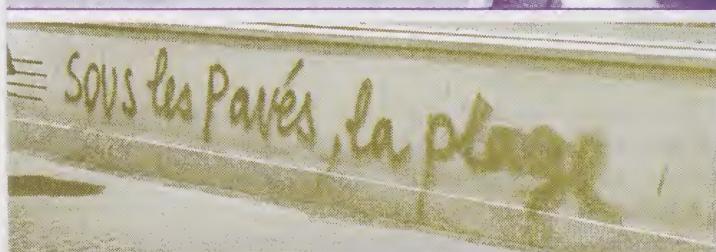
There was a palpable sense of possibility in the air and people realized they were not alone. They saw that others felt the same as they did and the old isolations were submerged into this huge channel of fun and opposition. Authority was challenged in the Rue de l'Estrapade, the Rue de Thoin and then throughout Paris, into much of France and the world beyond.

It is encouraging to realize that what started as a small protest against the arrest of students at the University of Nanterre for protesting the Vietnam war escalated so quickly. In retrospect it seems that surprised everyone. Mass rebellions can be caused by the smallest of incidents and resistance is always possible.

May '68 brought back into focus the role of the student in creating revolutionary change and for some years afterwards

Significance of May 68 continued on p27

← **Left page:** Photo - Love at the barricades, Paris 1968; Text - Situationist graffiti, Paris 1968, "plus je fais l'amour, plus j'ai envie de faire la révolution, plus je fais la révolution, plus j'ai envie de faire l'amour"



France 68: (top) Workers and students take to the streets; (center) Students united against the police in Paris; (bottom) Graffiti abounds. This Situationist slogan reads, *beneath the paving stones, the beach*.

University of Paris to protest the closure of Nanterre and the disciplinary hearings. The Sorbonne administration called in the police and closed that campus as well.

When the students attempted to leave, several of those labeled leaders were arrested. In response, many more students rushed to the Sorbonne to join the fight against the police.

In the following days university and high school students, teachers and supporters protested police invasion of the university. The police responded with more brutality. Demonstrators built barricades, in the tradition of resistance in Paris going back to the 19th century, while others dug up paving stones to hurl at the cops. Hundreds of marchers were arrested and many injured.

Live radio and TV coverage of police brutality against demonstrators incited many workers and others to strongly

sympathize with them. This all occurred in the context of labor unrest and ongoing wildcat strikes across the country demanding pay increases and improved working conditions.

On May 11, the government switched tactics in an attempt to dampen the rising anger among the population. The police were temporarily held back, the arrested students were released and the Sorbonne was reopened.

Students occupied the Sorbonne and declared it an autonomous “people’s university,” a place for anyone who wanted to express themselves.

In the auditoriums and lecture halls of university buildings, General Assemblies, based on equal participation and direct democracy decided on topics relevant to daily life. Action committees established contacts with striking workers, encouraging them to do the same in their workplaces.

Four hundred student-worker action committees in schools and enterprises in Paris and elsewhere, tackled issues important to them in factories and universities. They refused to continue the elite, hierarchical command form that administers daily life in capitalist society.

Workers occupied roughly fifty factories by May 16, and eleven million were on strike by the following week—approximately two-thirds of the French workforce at the time. These strikes were organized by the workers themselves. The established labor organizations, on the other hand, tried to contain this spontaneous outbreak of militancy by channeling it solely into a struggle for higher wages and other economic demands. But at least for a while, workers formulated their own broader, more political and radical goals than those put forward by the unions. In some cases, they began self-management in factories, refusing to accept either company or union bosses.

In order to retain some semblance of control over the workers and divert energies away from revolutionary possibilities, official union leaders called a national general strike on May 13 to protest against police violence and repression. At least a million people filled the streets demanding the resignation of the government, especially the president, Charles de Gaulle.

On May 24 there was a demonstration in Paris of 30,000 which marched toward the government buildings. But demonstrators were turned away by a combination of riot police and leftist organizations which judged the time was not right for attacking those buildings. The various anarchist groups were indecisive and too weak to take the initiative to occupy the ministries and stop them from functioning. So no actions to dislodge the government were made by anyone.

President de Gaulle went on TV on May 24 to urge the end of the occupations and strikes, promising to grant more self-management in work places and schools.

On May 25 and 26, Prime Minister Georges Pompidou, leaders of the major unions, and the employers association

attempted to negotiate a settlement, known as the Grenelle Agreements, which specified that occupations would end and everyone would return to work in exchange for some wage and economic gains. But this settlement was decisively turned down by the workers, and strikes and occupations continued.

De Gaulle decided that more drastic steps were necessary for his party to survive and avert a revolution. On May 29, he flew to the headquarters of the French military in Baden-Baden, Germany, to consult with top military officials about ending the insurgency. The next day he returned to Paris and appeared on television announcing that he was dissolving the National Assembly and calling for elections within forty days.

He also ordered workers to return to work, threatening to declare a state of emergency if there was resistance. Immediately after this speech, 800,000 Gaullist supporters marched in Paris.

During the first weeks of June, there were massive police actions to break strikes and occupations in all the major cities of France. Workers were injured and even some killed. At the same time, due to the lack of contact and coordination between workplaces, the unions were able to manipulate decision-making processes, end strikes and occupations in one workplace after another, and thereby collapse the movement.

On June 12th the government banned street demonstrations, outlawed the active anarchist and leftist organizations, and arrested many of their members. Police re-took the Sorbonne on June 16.

People were told that the only alternative remaining was the electoral arena. When elections were held later in June, the Gaullist party won a major parliamentary victory, taking 353 out of 486 seats.

The question of why things ended the way they did lingers.

Some anarchists blame the outcome on the lack of contact and coordination between different strikes and occupations throughout the country. Others feel that if anarchist groups had been stronger and more connected with each other they might have been able to help find a way to push things forward to replace the old authoritarian regime, including the communist union leaders, Stalinists and Trotskyists. Still others think it was the inability of so many to transcend the idea that everything depended on the working class and the resulting generally-accepted isolation of workers from students.

Nevertheless, the events of May '68 in France continue to inspire hope because they clearly demonstrate that revolutionary possibilities can emerge when least expected.

SK lives on the west coast of Turtle Island. She is one of those who, in 2018, still believe that anything can happen!



Paris, May 1968: Taking to the streets is more than building barricades and fighting the police. Perhaps more importantly, it's also a time for many hours of discussing ideals and passions that escape the mundane.

Significance of May 68 continued from p25

many leftist groups yearned for what they saw in Paris; a student-worker front that would provide the spearhead to overthrow capitalism. If it is now known that this alliance wasn't quite as rich as it appeared to be in the May days, the strategy still has potency.

This focus on students placed the emphasis on youth as the engine that drives social change. It's a seductive idea, but fraught with challenges. Any strategy for revolutionary change predicated around one age group doesn't, at first glance, appear to be the soundest of strategies. It's great to see young militants, students or not, at the forefront of social movements, but anarchism is for grandparents as much as anyone else. This idea appears to have got lost somewhere along the line and it should be something we could all work on.

May '68 also re-established the idea of the streets as the battleground of revolution. Being out on the streets was the public expression of willingness to fight for what we believe in and a way of attracting others to anarchist ideas.

Perhaps all the glamour and excitement was a little seductive. No doubt some saw the overturned cars and the barricades on the TV news and rushed to join in the action. But the primary area of struggle ultimately may have been elsewhere and overlooked as we were swayed by the bravery and militancy of those days.

To their credit anarchists and students did try to talk and collaborate with working class people whose response to them was, at times, not as positive as desired. If many workers held back, at least some dialogue took place and in some cases working men and women found a new voice and experienced situations that brought out the rich potential that was in them.

This ability to relate to people with different ideas does not appear to be a strength that some have today. It may be more fun (and safer) to be with people who think the same as us, but if the aim is still deep revolutionary change we will have to engage as some did in '68, with people who may initially think anarchist ideas are stupid or weird.

As the May days progressed, it became clear that many were in the streets and taking part in events because they



France 68: (left) Renault factory workers join the general strike that swept the country; (top right) poster calling workers to strike; (bottom right) French workers occupying a factory, joining the general strike.

sensed the meaninglessness of life under capitalism. We may well have the same feelings in 2018.

Thoroughgoing revolutionary change can only come about, though, when many more people understand anarchist ideals and passions and our task is to find the language that explains them in ways that people can understand. Taking to the streets might, eventually, be the end of a process rather than a beginning.

A concept ingrained in anarchism has always been internationalism—solidarity with struggles for freedom and liberation that surface throughout the world.

One slogan on a Parisian wall prompted, “It’s all our business” and it was!! May ‘68 stressed that the anti-colonial struggles going on in the world at the time were not just someone else’s concern, but ours as well.

In essence, another front of support opened up in the colonialist countries—a support that was loud, vigorous and effective and long may it continue. Certainly May ‘68 was a healthy reminder to anarchists in other countries that internationalism should be running through their veins a little more vigorously than it may have been.

Anarchists found themselves in the company of many left political groupings during the May days of ‘68. Without doubt there was a tension between us and them—one anarchist leaflet from the Sorbonne University accused

Communist Party members of the CGT trade union federation of handing over visiting students to the police.

The question remains for today’s anarchists as to who should be worked with to achieve anarchy. Of course, it is always necessary to support those who fight back against the brutalities of capitalism. How could we be anarchists if we didn’t?

That said, perhaps Paris ‘68 should be a reminder that left wing parties and programs have nothing in common with anarchist goals or practice—indeed, are as much our enemies as anyone. So many comrades have been murdered by people who considered themselves Marxist that it would be tragic if we still felt that we had much common ground between us.

When remembering May ‘68 we should also remember all those murdered by Marxists in Russia, Spain, Bulgaria and elsewhere and consider the relevance of those deaths to who should be chosen as allies now.

If achieving thoroughgoing revolutionary change is taken as a measurable criterion of success then the events of May ‘68 were a failure. Within weeks, Paris resumed some sense of normality, although conflict continued in a myriad of places afterwards. Nevertheless, there remained a fleeting glimpse of what could have been. May ‘68 was not the first time this has happened—anarchists can refer to hundreds of similar transient events both large and small where people challenged the economic and mental cruelty of capitalism and its attendant power structures.

In doing so, they celebrated an exhilarating autonomy, and discovered the richness and potential within themselves that had been previously smothered. The challenge now, more than

ever, is to assess what we must do to add the permanence that has been missing for so long.

Perhaps the strikes and occupations taking place in France now—actions as rich and vital as May ‘68—will provide some of that permanence.

If I may add a personal note: In Memoriam; those students murdered in the Tlatelolco Massacre, of October 2, 1968 by the Mexican state. You are not forgotten: Our Day Will Come.

Barry Pateman is a member of the Kate Sharpley Library collective—preserving and promoting anarchist history. katesharpleylibrary.net

THE ANIMAL HUNGRERS

JESÚS SEPÚLVEDA

The animal hungers
for light and strength
He hungers

Killing himself while hunting
Groaning
fatally and the last

Hunger springs
Sleepless

There are beasts without burden
that dance / grow fiery
They warily drink water

Famine distorts
Tea or sugar or bread
or fuel
or a tender hand?

The animal hungers
for goodness

The famished grow fat
leaving scraps for neither him
nor her
who remained with her cubs

The animal hungers
Tramps through trenches
up slopes
Sets out

He rears up on both paws and ransacks a beehive
Spreads his wings and throws himself from a cliff

The animal hungers
when he moves with the flock
or sells his lungs, his eyes
his goodness, his fury
hangs from meat hooks

There is no slaughterer without slaughterhouses

there is a journal, a story, a bus
and the *barrio* where he who writes grew up

There are massacres

Slaughterers dressed as generals in plastic aprons
or doctors in white coats
the chemists the priests enrobed

Or gold buttons / stripes
or suits
Bare-chested
or sweaty

When the animal hungers
Everything trembles
Books crumble
The earth quakes

Autumn flowers bloom in the garden
In the gazebo unreal and necessary
the breeze rushes
people stroll by

Home is one
who smokes sitting in the patio of his house
or in a hotel
or silently waits in the corner of his
infancy
or lingers outside
until they open the door

Hunger squeezes through crevices
Cuts grooves
Breathes
Climbs fences
Feeds

But the animal doesn't wait
grows weak or devours
He is hungry
and cold

He doesn't know how to live
with pain and anguish
but tries

He prepares tea / bathes
or doesn't

He has had enough

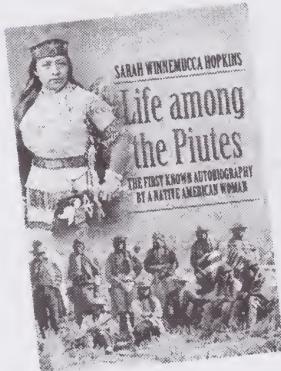
Slurps
Dips his bread

Sits still a moment

Jesús Sepúlveda teaches at the University of Oregon in Eugene.

He is the author of eight collections of poetry and three books of essays, including his green-anarchist manifesto, *The Garden of Peculiarities*, and his book on Latin American poetry, *Poets on the Edge*.

Translated from Spanish by Bill Rankin



**Life Among the Piutes:
Their Wrongs and Claims**
Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins
G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1883
Kindle edition, 2017. Also, free online

This is an amazing autobiography and first-hand account from Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins (born *Thocmentony*, meaning "Shell Flower;" c. 1844 – 1891) the grand-daughter of Chief Truckee (d. 1860), medicine chief of the Northern Paiute.

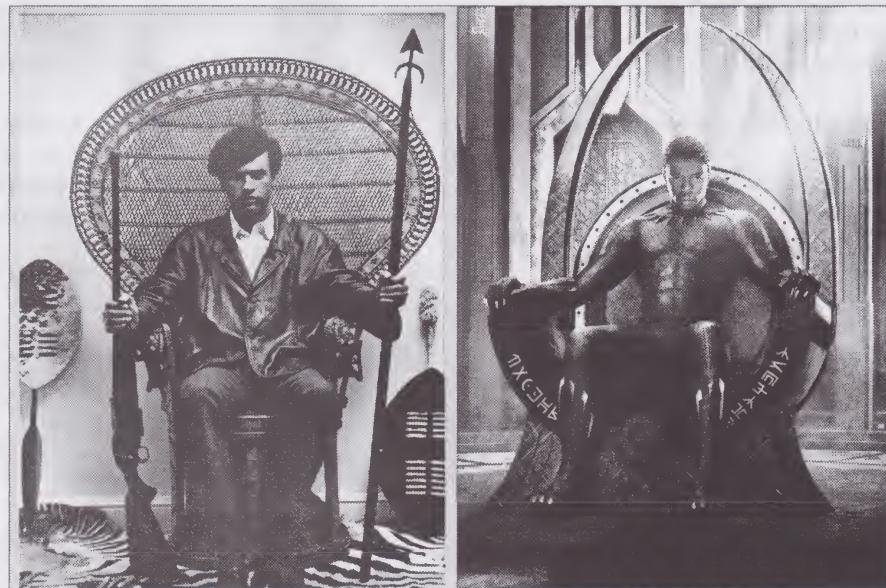
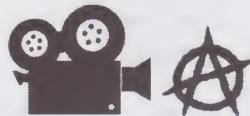
The first part of the narrative touches on Winnemucca recalling the tribe's first forty years of contact with European Americans during a time when her early childhood recollections give a dream-like quality to the first interactions.

As the author recalls, "I was a very small child when the first white people came into our country. They came like a lion, yes, like a roaring lion, and have continued so ever since, and I have never forgotten their first coming."

Equally powerful in the opening section is her grandfather's "talking rag" letter treated with reverence as a powerful amulet in dealing with these mysterious, unpredictable, dangerous, and powerful creatures. (This potent "rag" was a letter of introduction from U.S. General John C. Frémont commanding Truckee for his support during the Mexican-American War.)

Later in life, Winnemucca became an interpreter and Paiute representative to the U.S. Indian Bureau. In 1883, she gave nearly three hundred lectures in major Northeast and Mid-Atlantic cities to heighten awareness of an all-too-typical tragedy of broken treaties, violence, and concentration camp-like reservations.

Her book appeared the same year.
—Tom Schulte



Huey P. Newton, Black Panther Party chairman and Chadwick Boseman as T'Challa / Black Panther. The imagery presented in the film must be intentional.

Black Panther: Breakthrough or More Hollywood Marketing?

Black Panther
Director: Ryan Coogler
134 min.

MATTHEW LUCAS

On the list of watershed films of 2018 will be *Black Panther*, Marvel Studios' astronomically budgeted blockbuster, which raked in critical plaudits as well as ticket sales on an unprecedented scale. The film has struck a chord with both black and white audiences.

The film, significantly featuring a predominantly black cast, helmed by a black writer and director, Ryan Coogler of 2013's excellent *Fruitvale Station*, topped over \$1 billion in global sales, a success in the metric by which Hollywood films are typically judged and enshrined as culturally impactful.

Most of us will recognize the phenomenon: As the American Empire groans on, oppressive corporate and state institutions are yielding, at last, small tokens on the altar of social justice, sliding a little further opening of the gates they've long held closed for so many.

Since the movie marks an important milestone in black cinema within Hollywood's major studio system, it's not surprising that the film itself argues for negotiation and participation in oppressive systems, rather than a rejection of them.

Using as a *tabula rasa* the fictional African kingdom of Wakanda, which has been preserved by a technology cloaking it from annihilation by colonialism and diaspora, the film debates the future of black engagement with the Imperialist Minority World. In it, there is a good Black Panther—the benevolent monarch

T'Challa, a model of modernization theory who will open his hermit kingdom. And against him, a bad Black Panther named Killmonger—embittered, militant, Third Worldist.

With *Black Panther*, Hollywood, historically one of the US' chief organs of anti-black propaganda, has found a way to capitalize on black voices. It has in the past tried, first with the 1970s Blaxploitation cycle, and then with the 1990s black film wave, to harness this market power. These attempts have often met with defiance.

To note two instances, Jamaa Fanaka, whose independent success, *Penitentiary* (1979,) found him welcomed into the Director's Guild, only to be expelled after he vocally criticized industry hiring practices of women and minorities. And then Spike Lee's epic, *Malcolm X* (1992), produced by Warner Bros., which opens with the searing, uncompromising image of the American flag intercut with video of the Rodney King beating, before it at last goes up in flames. Lee, who wrested the project from white director Norman Jewison, signaled immediately with defiant and controversial images that his film would not be sanitized for the Hollywood market.

These answers to Hollywood's attempted recuperation of black-produced black images recall a history of black film protest trailing all the way back to fierce resistance over the industry's foundational piece of anti-black propaganda, D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915).

The height of Hollywood's cultural power in the 1940s, when average weekly movie attendance hovered between 60-70 percent of the population (it is under 10 percent today), coincided with an unprecedented growth in NAACP membership, which climbed from 40,000 in 1940 to 450,000 in 1946. This resistance helped stanch the flow of plantation genre films like *Gone With the Wind* (1939), lucrative white mythologies that portrayed an antebellum fantasy of grateful, loyal slaves and a romanticized planter class.

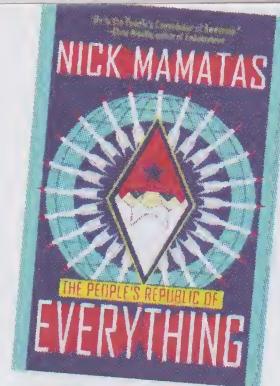
Black Panther abandons this tradition of challenging Hollywood from within and without. It urges not just collaboration with the organs of racial injustice, but complicity in its depiction of T'Challa's white ally—of all people, a CIA agent named Everett Ross. When reduced, the film's embrace of an autocratic ruler allied with the CIA willingly funneling resources to the West, does not depict a new future for Majority World nations populated by people of color. It depicts the one already created by imperialist intervention.

Still, it is possible to glean positive changes in this film. Adapting to an industry which does not allow serious criticism of the American system still opens new avenues for black filmmakers. Michael Boyce Gillespie, in his book *Film Blackness* (2016, Duke University) points out that Hollywood's near monopoly on the black image has had a limiting effect on the portrayal of blackness in black independent film. Mimesis, depictions of real black experience, have been valued to such an extent that black film has often been judged solely on a film's degree of verisimilitude.

Coogler isolates this realism to a small corner of *Black Panther*, a basketball court in Oakland that opens the film. The rest is a colorful fantasy, in which a black cast is allowed to assume the roles of genre characters, such as spies and superheroes, and occupy a world that bleeds into both fantasy and science fiction. If we see too little of the lived life of Wakandans, and the world doesn't quite open up enough to really invite the imagination, *Black Panther* nevertheless could expand avenues of portraying blackness on the big screen.

Matthew Lucas is an anarchist and cinephile living in Portland, Ore. He is a bartender, occasional Latin teacher, and co-founder and curator of Church of Film.

Web site: churchoffilm.org



The People's Republic of Everything

Nick Mamatas

Tachyon Publications 2018, tachyonpublications.com

Nick Mamatas, who first entered the radical literary scene two decades ago as one of the translators of Jae-Eui Lee's *Kwangju Diary*, has been a consistent yet consistently surprising voice since.

The People's Republic of Everything is the fourth collection of Mamatas' short works and highlights his far-flung explorations from steampunk to noir, laced with his own particular style of political outrage and hope.

A highpoint for both anarchists and lovers of literature is the inclusion of the full corrected text of his short 2006 novel, *Under My Roof*, described by Mamatas as "a satire about nuclear war and nuclear families," never before available with the author's preferred ending.

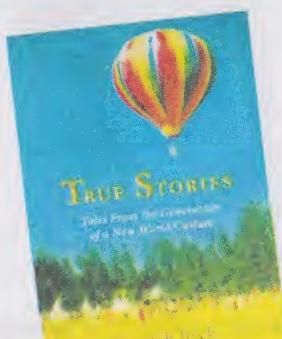
In the novella-length, "Arbeitskraft," a group of phosphorous-maimed match girls confront the role of technology in, and against, the capitalist system.

"The Great Armored Train" pits theory against fact and love against war aboard Leon Trotsky's train during a battle on the Polish frontier, critically portraying the effects of theorists on the working-class people around them. "Tom Silex, Spirit Smasher" tells a story of hidden labor and lost creativity.

Notes at the end of each story present a political and cultural context allowing readers who are unfamiliar with, say, difference engines or the vagaries of the film industry to understand more about the genesis of the story. In some cases, the notes are nearly as entertaining as the stories themselves.

Mamatas never stops grappling with questions about how political and economic systems leave sticky, often smeared fingerprints on individual lives.

— Carrie Laben



True Stories: Tales from the Generation of a New World Culture

Garrick Beck

iUniverse 2017

Garrick Beck spans a personal journey through radical bohemia in the 1950s, hippie utopianism in the 1960s, back-to-the-land communalism in the 1970s, to applying those ethics today through community work and urban land-reclamation back in the New York City of his youth.

He was born into artistic activism as the offspring of Julian Beck and Judith Malina, the leading figures of the Living Theatre. Early vignettes describe ban-the-bomb street-theatre actions amid the Cold War hysteria of his childhood, with beat legends like Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac making cameos.

After the Living Theatre is effectively exiled to Europe by political repression here, the vistas expand, leading to the naked and acid-fueled performances of "Paradise Now," and vision quests in the desert of Morocco.

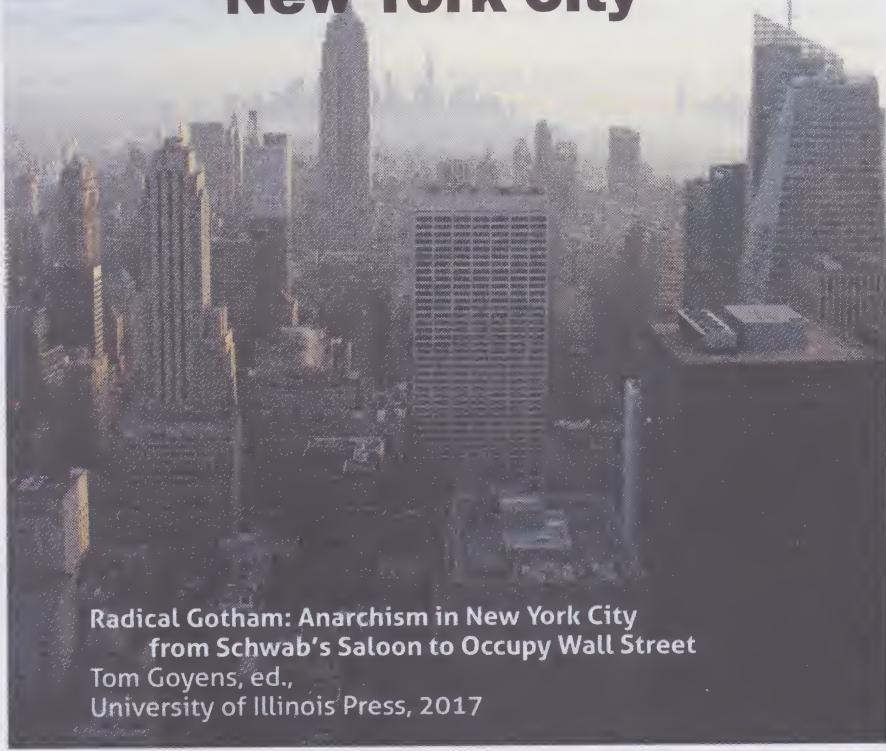
Back in the States as a young man, the action shifts to the West Coast, and a nomadic lifestyle, chasing his communal vision at hippie happenings. This culminates in the birth of the Rainbow Gatherings—they've been going every summer since the first one at Strawberry Lake, Colorado, in 1972.

For all the hedonism and political quietism often associated with this movement today, the roots were intensely idealistic. After years pursuing the good life and practicing organic agriculture on the Rainbow Farm in Oregon's Coast Range, starting in the 1980s, Beck returns periodically to New York helping to reclaim urban blight for community gardens on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

This is a book about seriously applying an anarcho-pacifist vision to real life, with a sense of roots and utter commitment.

—Bill Weinberg

Exploring the Past & Present of Anarchists in New York City



Radical Gotham: Anarchism in New York City from Schwab's Saloon to Occupy Wall Street
Tom Goyens, ed.,
University of Illinois Press, 2017

RUI PRETI

New York City is well known for its radicals, past and present. The lives and deeds of some noteworthy anarchists who have lived there (including Emma Goldman, Paul Goodman and Murray Bookchin), and the high points of local movement history have been discussed extensively in articles and books. Yet there is a shortage of bottom up histories describing and exploring the lives of non-famous anarchists of earlier times or currently.

Several of the articles in Tom Goyens's volume, *Radical Gotham*—including his fine introduction—provide overviews and narratives of anarchist life and times in New York that enrich understanding of rebellious movements there and in the wider world.

In his introduction, Goyens notes that his book starts from the premise that "...anarchism is and has been a distinct, resilient, transnational, and significant political philosophy and movement that deserves to be studied on its own turf. Liberal and Marxist historiography has not always taken this approach. The success or failure of anarchism, for example, is often judged by socialist or Marxist criteria. Those who search the past for or expect from the future a successful 'anarchist state' or 'anarchist party' fundamentally misunderstand the movement: anarchists never set out to accomplish such a project."

The book begins with essays dealing in depth with the first anarchist groups in

the city—German, Jewish, Italian, and Spanish immigrants—between roughly 1880 and 1930. The writers skillfully explore the social dynamics and histories of these groups and their publications. With their awareness of common human needs and their close connections with like-minded people elsewhere, these groups shaped the New York anarchist culture as cosmopolitan and internationalist in spirit.

Later selections focus on less broadly-based groups that the authors believe to have had significant influence on pre-World War II and post-World War II anarchist tendencies in the city, such as the Catholic Worker movement and the Why?/Resistance group. Unlike the groups dealt with in the first section of the book, these were clearly rooted in North American intellectual experiences and spoke to a broad range of leftists in addition to anarchists.

Essays on Up Against the Wall Motherfucker, the Living Theater, Gordon Matta-Clark's Anarchitecture, and the radical art and cultural center, ABC No Rio, explore the impact of post-World War II consumer society, slum clearance, and gentrification on the cultural life of the city from anarchist perspectives.

MOST ESSAYS IN THE BOOK focus on ways in which anarchist ideas became the basis of a variety of autonomous cultural projects and acts of resistance. For example, readers are informed that theater projects were as important to German and Jewish anarchists of the 19th century as to the Living Theatre or the Motherfuckers in the mid-20th century. They concretely describe the ways anarchists from various tendencies have criticized capitalist society, both through political actions such as demonstrations, as well as through the metaphors of artistic presentations.

Several essays in the collection deal with the highly relevant topic of social space. Historically and today, New York anarchists have always experienced the problems of finding and maintaining spaces. A lot of effort has been put into establishing and supporting radical spots for meetings and performances in saloons, halls, and the like, no less than the public spaces of streets and parks.

In recent decades, places for meeting, rallying, and living have been disappearing, part of the social atrophy brought on by neoliberal political-economic pressures. The essays on ABC No Rio and Occupy Wall Street deal specifically with these challenges, but the importance of social spaces also runs as a theme through many other selections.

Unfortunately, the book fails to develop a fuller understanding of why and how anarchist groups and activities have become less rooted in immigrant and industrial working-class neighborhoods over the years. This might have been at least in part remedied by including articles about some other mid-20th century anarchist groups that participated in the New York scene and discussed the changes,

such as the Libertarian League and Anarchos.

It is somewhat disappointing to find that the essay dealing with Occupy Wall Street does not actually discuss the involvement of anarchists as such. The author indicates that anarchist ideas influenced the development of processes used for deciding and executing the projects each Occupy group chose.

But many of the projects were basically leftist reformist in character. The author tells us:

"Occupy Wall Street was not explicitly 'anarchist' or even anti-capitalist per se, but it bore the deep imprint of anarchist praxis in its emphasis on building alternative forms of political and social engagement outside conventional politics and the hegemony of the commodity form. In fact, most occupiers would probably have rejected the moniker, since the figure of the nihilistic, bomb-toting anarchist continues to dominate the national imaginary."

IN NEW YORK CITY, OCCUPY PROTESTED unjust Wall Street institutions, primarily arguing against the mechanisms resulting in the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, while avoiding confronting capitalism directly.

The ways in which New York anarchists did or did not engage in Occupy are not addressed. There is no discussion of the highly charged debate about the black bloc tactic in which Chris Hedges infamously branded participants as "the cancer in Occupy." Perhaps it might have been more fruitful to choose other events and activities to explore for recent anarchist experiences in New York City.

Despite the shortcomings of some of the articles, *Radical Gotham* is definitely worth reading, especially because of the connections it makes between past and present in the anarchist journey, as well as the questions it can provoke readers into raising.

Rui Preti is a long-time friend of the Fifth Estate and a great believer in the value of continuous questioning.

Fifth Estate
sharing a
table with Free
Marius Mason
campaigners
at the Fight
Toxic Prisons
conference in
Pittsburgh in
June.
—photo:
Peter
Werbe



John Zerzan on the End of Civilization

The Way of the Passenger Pigeon

A People's History of Civilization
John Zerzan
Feral House 2018 feralhouse.com

PETER WERBE

Beginning with John Zerzan's 1970s jeremiads in this publication, his predictions of social collapse and later of civilization's were best summed up by the title of his 1976 Fifth Estate article, "The Decline and Fall of Everything."

In *A People's History of Civilization*, his critiques of the basic elements of civilization such as language, agriculture, and even art, were hotly debated in these pages 40 years ago.

However, as evidence of the world's worsening woes have become more manifest, Zerzan now seems even more like Cassandra, cursed by the gods with a gift of prophecy, but who no one believes.

Now, with evidence of imminent collapse increasing (including in a book by that title), concerns of even mainstream writers like Paul Ehrlich, Elon Musk and Stephen Hawking, echo what Zerzan sees as the dire consequences of the planet-wide social and technological system humans have constructed.

FOR HIM, IN THIS COLLECTION of 16 previously published essays that range in themes from the Bronze Age to the Luddites, cities, and World War I, to "Civilization's Pathological Endgame," we were doomed from the first step towards civilization—representation, symbolism, or ritual of any sort.

It's possible to take away what the



book details by a sentence in the first paragraph of the book: "Domestication and agriculture bring ruin to every civilization, including our own now-global version."

WHAT SANK ROME and Carthage, Egypt and the Aztecs, now confronts the entire planet. There are so many examples of what looms ahead for us. A particularly striking recent one is the prediction that within a few years, the amount of plastic in the seas will outweigh that of all the fish.

But it's not like civilization brought about an otherwise happy set of circumstances prior to the invention of that substance derived from oil.

Zerzan lays out a frighteningly convincing argument in his essays that from the first moment a man stepped onto a ziggurat tower around 3,000 BCE, constructed by forced labor, to declare that his absolute rule emanated from the gods, humans entered a world built on work and war, hierarchy and patriarchy.

But, when and why did we leave the Garden of Eden, abandon the Golden

Age, and enter the terror of history?

Cassius tells Brutus as they plot against Julius Caesar, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves . . ." Just as in the sky-god story of Adam and Eve, eating the apple of knowledge dooms us to the end Zerzan sees approaching.

As humans are forever stained in the Judeo-Christian myth, in the secular story, our social essence will bring us to ruin for leaving a paradisaical existence of hunter/gatherer society for civilization, but without the prospect of a Redeemer.

THE HUMAN CAPACITY for abstract thought—manifesting in language, symbolism, and representation—lead to increasingly complex societies and finally to agricultural systems and mass societies on every continent.

These states were universally marked by hierarchy, absolute rule, religions which justified power arrangements, slavery, and constant warfare.

Many observers mark the rise of agriculture as the most profound change in human history, as does Zerzan.

But what allowed this mass cultural shift to occur? It wasn't small band society one day and empire with rulers devoted to power and wealth accumulation the next.

Zerzan, relying on the work of interdisciplinary academics, sees the apple in this case as ritual and representation going so far as to indict language, cave paintings, and Stonehenge in the Fall from Grace.

JOHN SEES ALL OF WHAT WE consider to be human traits as bringing us to the brink of catastrophe.

Jacques Camatte, in the *Wandering of Humanity*, talks about capital that has "run away" from human control.

Link that up with Albert Camus' metaphor of a train barreling down the tracks, passengers supping in an elegant dining car, none realizing the bridge is out around the bend. What happened to the Passenger pigeon can happen to us—a population of billions, and then, zero—in a flash.

Many of John's essays are copiously footnoted with the many sources he draws upon, but he complains at the end of several printed without them that they appeared in "a publication that did not want endnotes."

I think they read all the better minus them since most are just citations and interrupt the flow of the articles.

Also, dating his essays and crediting where they first appeared would be helpful for understanding the context in which they were written.

The important question for John and for ourselves is, why bother to do anything if we're going to be just a brief, unfortunate instant on a planet billions of years old which will soon correct its balance once we're gone? John doesn't propose an answer so perhaps it's best to enjoy our last supper before the train hits the collapsed trestle.

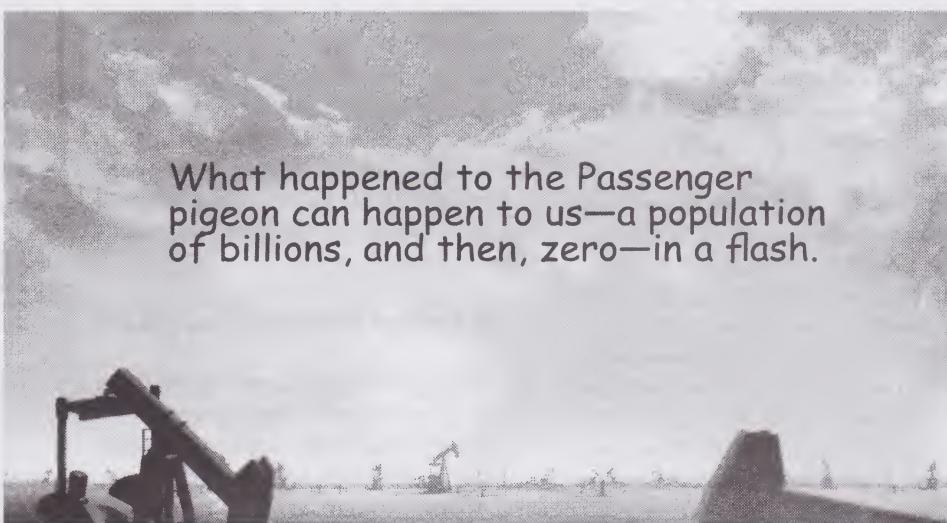
But, I say no to that, and I'm sure he would agree.

Zerzan's writing needs to be taken as a warning, not as a Cassandra-like prophecy. His chapters on historic resistance to domestication, discipline, and domination illustrate that there really is a "new world in our hearts," but one that has to be fought for.

The challenge of organizing for revolutionary social change that veers from the fatal trajectory he describes has never been greater.

Peter Werbe is part of the *Fifth Estate* editorial collective.

John Zerzan's *Fifth Estate* articles, including ones in this collection, are available at FifthEstate.org, in the "Search FE authors" box.



What happened to the Passenger pigeon can happen to us—a population of billions, and then, zero—in a flash.

IMPOSSIBLE REVOLUTION

MAKING SENSE OF THE SYRIAN TRAGEDY

Impossible Revolution: Making Sense of the Syrian Tragedy

Yassin al-Haj Saleh
Haymarket Books 2017

This book is a necessary corrective to the dominant perception—left, right and center—that the opposition in Syria are all jihadists and dictator Bashar Assad the best bet for stability.

Long a left-wing dissident in Assad's Syria, Saleh is a veteran of the dictator's prisons. Here, he traces the origins of the Syrian revolution to agony caused by the regime's "economic liberalization" (socialist phrases aside), describes the initially unarmed opposition's popular-democratic nature, and discusses the struggle to keep the Free Syrian Army accountable to this grassroots base after it became clear a military dimension to the revolution was necessary.

He makes the case that the Assad regime can be termed fascist even by the most rigorous definition, and also analyzes the emergence of "militant nihilism" in the form of ISIS and al-Qaeda (he rejects the word "terrorist" as propagandistic).

Saleh doesn't emphasize the influence of anarchism on the popular-democratic opposition, and offers little discussion of the Kurds, with their own anarchist-informed model and autonomous zone.

This is an oversight, as the Arab and Kurdish opposition have been very effectively played off against one another by Assad and the Great Powers. He also perhaps too readily dismisses the danger of a "tyranny of the majority" in Syria—that is, of Sunnis over the regime-favored Alawites and other minorities once the tables are turned.

But he notes the irony that these fears are often raised "by the very same people who stammer when it comes to discussing an already existing, incontestable tyranny."

—Bill Weinberg

PM Press: Ten Years of Literary Molotovs

CRAIG O'HARA

Bay Area-based PM Press celebrated its tenth anniversary of publishing in May with a bang-up party in Oakland, Calif., where staff, authors, and well-wishers howled at political sketch comedy, smashed a captured Amazon delivery drone, and danced the night away to punk rock.

PM was founded at the end of 2007 by a small group of people with decades of publishing, media, and organizing experience. At the outset we strived to create and distribute radical audio, video, and text releases through every available channel in all possible formats. True to one expanded variation of our name, "Print Matters," however, we're biased in favor of hardcopy books as the best format in which to communicate ideas for social change.

PM Press has never had a *New York Times* bestseller, and you will not find our books reviewed in its pages. It's not part of the financial equation for small presses to reach the mainstream by moving millions of copies of single titles, although we have sold millions of copies of books in total, often one at a time, face to face.

Events like anarchist book fairs and the existence of radical book shops are critical to exposing PM's work around the world. We organized, promoted, or attended 370 author events and 200 tabling exhibits in 2017 alone. PM is currently staffed by 10 people; several scattered around the West Coast, others working from the Rockies, Appalachia, New England, Montreal, and in the UK. After years of volunteer work, we are able to pay living wages by producing 30 books per year for gross sales surpassing a million dollars. And, like the *Fifth Estate*, PM just celebrated its 400th release.

There is a shrinking audience in

2018 for historical anarchist texts, which have long been the staple of movement publishers. While anarchism is a topic of intellectual study and debate in the universities, a defanged discourse too often takes place apart from the poor and working-class communities that nurtured the movement in the 19th and 20th centuries.

One of our tasks as anarchist publishers, then, is to inject the historical politics of anarchism—active self-organizing, promotion of equality, opposition to hierarchy, the state, and organized religion—into the movements, milieus, and media of the times. Anarchism is always on the side of the oppressed. It never seeks mainstream respectability.

We have a broad enough umbrella to be a part of the discussion within many different cultures and experiences, from political prisoners to punk rockers, social scientists to cartoonists. Among our bestsellers, books such as *Sisters of the Revolution: A Feminist Speculative Fiction Anthology*, the full-color *Understanding Jim Crow: Using Racist Memorabilia to Teach Tolerance and Promote Social Justice*, and the West Virginia history book *Gun Thugs, Rednecks, and Radicals*, bridge perceived gaps between traditional supporters of anarchist publications, those involved with grassroots social justice activism, and professional writers and educators doing some of the best work in their fields.

At the level on which independent publishers operate, selling 3,000 copies of a book in one year makes it a bestseller. A handful of anarchist-specific backlist titles, including books on the CNT in the Spanish Revolution, German philosopher Gustav Landauer's collected works, and titles by UK activists Stuart Christie or Colin Ward, may not sell 100 copies annually, combined.

Many of the problems facing inde-



pendent publishers today are the same as decades ago. Rising physical costs of producing a book—paper, freight, storage, advertising, distribution—are still everyday concerns. And, only a few want to do the unglamorous and physically demanding work of warehousing, or spend years learning the highly-detailed, solitary skills of proofing, indexing, and book design for projects that will rarely be financially profitable.

Yet countless writers, artists, and activists are submitting more manuscripts and proposals than PM could ever publish. If a dozen independent publishers formed tomorrow to disseminate these texts, in every format and genre, they'd have plenty of work to do.

Anti-authoritarian books garner plenty of attention within the modern anarchist movement, but building lasting alternatives to capitalism is what we have to do, not just churn out books. The ideas and examples contained in these books must inspire the doers who create community lending libraries, food-growing and sharing co-ops, non-capitalist child and elder care, prisoner support networks—and yes, eventually, revolution.

See PM titles & t-shirts at pmpress.org

Craig O'Hara, cofounder of PM Press, has spent 25 years publishing and selling radical books to stores, at book fairs, conferences, rock concerts, flea markets, and activist gathering.

What does it mean to be human or transhuman?

The Transhuman Future: Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom

Cory Doctorow
Tor Books 2003

JASON RODGERS

Cory Doctorow has a clear vision of the future. In a way, I hate him for that, because it

is not a future in which I want to live. But he is probably right.

He extrapolates current situations and trends to create a realistic vision of the future. Often these include business trends, making them even more fleshed out visions. However, he is not a world builder. He writes humanistic stories, but about *transhumanism*, the idea that people can evolve beyond our current physical and mental limitations, especially by means of science and technology.

In a way, Doctorow, author of numerous science fiction novels, has the same storytelling skills as fellow sci fi writer and cyber punk creator, Bruce Sterling. But whereas Sterling was somewhat of an anarchist, Doctorow is a technocrat and transhumanist. This might make his vision even more important.

The novel tells the story of a transhuman movement that achieves immortality. But not through nanomachines that fix every ailment. That would never work, because humans are too injury-prone and tend to die by accident. Instead, cloned bodies and digital backups of consciousness are utilized.

This changes many aspects of life. Behavior dramatically changes because there is a suspension of consequences. Along with this is the ability to eliminate parts of reality that are unpleasant, or more accurately, eliminate awareness of them.

In *Down and Out* there is a sequence in which the narrator remembers a brief marriage he had in which his wife has a psychotic break. She is restored from a previous backup. She then decides to go back to an even older backup, "back to who I was, before I met you." The painful relationship is not merely ended, it's eliminated altogether from consciousness.

Painful portions of consciousness could be erased, but the process of backing up consciousness would probably flatten it out. Consciousness does not seem transferable to a digital form. It is not merely the sum of memories and thoughts. There is more complexity. This is why artificial intelligence is notoriously hard to create. The best that can be done is using predictive algorithms to create an illusion of intelligence. But this is a significantly more stunted definition than the actual functioning of a mammalian mind.

Amusingly, the narrator is highly critical of moving further into the transhuman realm. He is part of an adhocracy committee that runs the Magic Kingdom



amusement park. A rival group suggests transitioning from rides to a virtual reality implanted into the brain. "You don't want to be a post-person. You want to stay human. The rides are human," he says.

And, later, "What Debra's people are building, it's hive-mind shit. Directly implanting thoughts!" Like many people, he is only critical of one aspect, not the total situation.

Doctorow makes a fine point for how these developments occur. You can't just take part; the whole paradigm soon follows. He writes:

"Once you took backup-and-restore, the rest of Bitchunry just followed, a value-system settling over you. Those who didn't take backup-and-restore may have objected, but hey, they all died."

This shows two important points. First, it is not possible to passively resist. Second, in order to resist, a view of totality as enemy is necessary. This is certainly not Doctorow's point, but it's mine from his novel.

Jason Rogers' recently published zine, "Transgression or Affirmation," is available from him at POB 10894, Albany NY 12201

The Trials & Tribulations of Mrs. Whale Head

STEVEN CLINE

During Whale Head's sleep, her organs grew very impatient and bored since they had become hyper intelligent. In order to amuse themselves, they read all the books in a twenty-seven-mile radius by spatial osmosis, and also managed to solve the paradox of the radial ostrich, which had been plaguing the King's court philosophers for many decades now.

Around three in the morning, the right lung climbed out of her ear and squish-squashed off down the road to tell the King the wonderful news.

Whale Head woke around eight, feeling very rested and content. She sat down for a delightful breakfast, but midway through it she heard a loud knock on the door. She opened it, and standing before her was the King's Feet Man. The Feet Man brought together his two feet and with them silently mouthed these words:

"Greetings, illustrious and worthwhile maiden. My King demands, um, requests your presence in the castle immediately."

Whale head was most definitely put off by the Feet Man's impertinent tone, but decided that she had really better go along with him, and together they headed off towards the castle.

Now, the King of this land was a rather disagreeable fellow, as are all Kings. He was in the unique habit of boiling and eating all of the three-legged children born in his kingdom. This was because one of his court philosophers erroneously believed that three-legged children contained a variety of medicinal and healing properties, and had informed the King of his discovery. It had been an endless massacre at court ever since.

In any case, when Whale Head arrived at the throne room the King reluctantly welcomed her, motioning for her to sit down on a nearby cushion.

"So, tell me all about it. How did an ugly old spinster such as yourself solve the radial ostrich paradox?" asked the King, as he suckled on the pickled toes of an infant.

Whale Head, having no remembrance of any such event, merely said, "Excuse me?"

"You know, the old paradox. A messenger came this morning to tell me the news. Your right lung, I think. Out with it, hag, or I shall throw you down the garbage chute," said the King.

"Hmph, how very rude. I've had quite enough of gods and masters, thank you," said Whale Head, and she kicked the King's smug head clean off his shoulders. It bounced off



a few of the throne room's walls, eventually landing in the floating pigeon bowl. She then tore off her red cotton dress and swung it over her head in triumph.

The castle guards and holy men came rushing towards old Whale Head with drawn swords and stern reproaches, but she merely recited the exact permutations of the universal calculi, causing them to disappear in a puff of incomprehension. In their places stood a myriad of chickens, frogs, kiwis, and other kindly animal folk.

Afterwards, she traveled down to the dungeon and released all three thousand and thirteen of the three-legged children the King had gathered over the years. In order to prevent any further Kingship-ing, they hired a local giant to squish the castle between his toes, and everyone went off on their merry way.

Whale Head spent the rest of her days in her cabin on the outskirts of the town, writing various philosophical and scientific tracts and treatises, and generally being very happy and amused with her lot in life. On her one hundred and eleventh birthday, she accidentally stumbled upon the solution for serpentine coil squares, and ascended into the 17th plane of existence where she continues to live to this day as a flattened paper wig.

Steven Cline is a writer and collage artist living in Atlanta. He helps edit the surrealist journal, *Peculiar Mormyrid*.

Against the State; Against the Grain

Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States

James C. Scott

Yale University 2017 yalebooks.yale.edu

GRACIE FOREST

In his latest book, James Scott continues his exploration of the relationship between domestication and the development of hierarchies of power in pre-modern and modern societies. He is particularly interested in examining the situations of people who resisted being incorporated into states. *Against the Grain* rejects the view that human history is a story of linear progression leading to the conveniences of contemporary civilization.

Scott also challenges the primitivist perspective of a one-way process of loss of innocence and alienation from the wild—as hunter-gatherers were domesticated into agriculture and then subjugation by states.

Scott, a Yale professor of political science and anthropology, discusses two basic categories, barbarians and savages and their relationship to states. He defines barbarians as groups (often pastoralists) not subject to state authorities but who may pose a military threat to them. However, they may, at times, develop cooperative relations with them.

Savages are defined as people considered by state officials to be culturally incapable of cooperation (generally foraging and hunting bands), who pose no real military threat to the power of states. Both groups are viewed with hostility by state elites because they set inappropriate examples for domesticated state subjects.

In discussing the diverse circumstances and societal forms of groups resisting state rule, Scott brings together recently developed research that challenges earlier ideas about how the natural environment may have shaped and been shaped over the millennia by human societies (as well as by our hominid ancestors). He also examines a growing body of material relevant to understanding more about how civilizations began.

Scott avoids presenting an oversimplified picture of those who resisted civilization as admirable and those who submitted to it as pitiful and contemptible. He recognizes there have been significant differences between groups at different times and places. Groups resisting civilization while living on the fringes of states and empires have had a variety of complex interactions with neighboring authoritarian societies.

Some groups of barbarians living near societies governed by elites helped strengthen the power of centralized authorities by providing them with slaves and soldiers. On the other hand, sometimes such groups assisted slaves to escape the grip of the state, thereby weakening it by causing labor shortages. Most so-called barbarians living on the fringes of organized states, through most of history, have been those who ran away from states rather than people who were never exposed to them.

Only those living far from the reach of states and empires have been able to escape these complex relationships completely.

For Scott, fire is probably the most important tool humans employed for shaping and being shaped by the environment. He notes that evidence for its use is now dated at least 400,000 years ago.

It predates the development of agriculture 12,000 years ago, and new findings indicate that it may have been used by hominids before the appearance of modern humans.

Fire enabled hunter-gatherers to adapt the landscape around them—to clear areas and make them available for fast-growing, prey-attracting plants and for hunting. The ability to use it for cooking allowed humans to extract more energy from food than most other animals can, and to eat a far wider range of plants and animals.

Recent archaeological research has found that some people lived in settled communities long before the adoption of agriculture—as much as four thousand years earlier—demonstrating that agriculture is not necessarily what makes settled life possible, as was previously argued. Environments rich in a wide variety of food sources, such as wetlands, enabled hunter-gatherers to settle in one place for long periods.

Current evidence indicates that there were complex societies possessing abstract thought long before agricultural systems developed. This challenges the idea that sophisticated technologies and agriculture are causally linked to the development of state systems. Scott

describes groups which demonstrated sophisticated technical knowledge, but were not subjugated by states.

He also challenges the idea that all agriculture necessarily leads to the development of hierarchies and state consolidation. He discusses how the cultivation of certain specific crops, namely cereal grains—that could be monitored by tax collectors and other state officials—were much more significant for the development of state domination than other domesticated crops. This is due, Scott notes, to the fact that they are “visible, divisible, assessable, storable, transportable, and rationable,” all at the same time.

Moreover, research has shown that the adoption of agriculture and state bureaucracy has not necessarily been a one-way process. Some groups abandoned agriculture in favor of hunting and gathering to cope with environmental challenges and/or to gain freedom from onerous state controls.

This is a book with strong anarchist ideas. While Scott is not optimistic about current possibilities for escaping state dominance, he expresses in *Against The Grain* and elsewhere his firm opposition to societies that allow disparities in wealth and power.

He notes that there are always good reasons for resistance because states’ interests and the interests of those ruled are not just different, but are usually opposed to each other. To cite just one example, state elites have always waged wars in order to expand their dominance over resources, including more subjugated human beings. But the pursuit of these goals is counter to the life and wellbeing of those under their sway as well as those outside their rule.

Gaining a more nuanced idea of how current destructive power relations came to be and the varied ways peoples have resisted in the past might help us figure out new ways to escape the state.

When Gracie Forest isn’t reading, writing or watching the hummingbirds outside her window, she loves to take long walks by the ocean.

Becoming Masterless

A Myth for Our Time

In Search of the Masterless
Men of Newfoundland
Seaweed & Ron Sakolsky
Ardent Press, 2017
ardentpress.com

QUINCY B. THORN



Seaweed and Ron Sakolsky have put together a book to inspire current and future rebels. Much more than history, it relates a myth with the potential to nurture hope for freer ways of life.

At a time when existence is shadowed by the possibility of nuclear war and the near-certainty of climate-pushed calamity, listing the causes seems much easier than listing, let alone carrying out, potential solutions.

One obvious cause is the fact that those in control—the masters—are unwilling to rid humanity and the world of the direst dangers we face.

Nevertheless, throughout history and on all continents, people have taken personally the threats, degradations and humiliations heaped on them daily and declared themselves masterless, no longer under the control of individuals and forces determined to deny them life and liberty.

Like our predecessors, those of us living today are capable of striking out in the direction of such a solution. For the journey, we might bear in mind the adventures of those who went that way in the past. This would include the story told by Seaweed and Ron Sakolsky in this fascinating book.

AS SUMMARIZED BY SEAWEED IN THE BOOK’S OPENING ESSAY, during the 18th century, consortiums of wealthy English merchants decided to build a colony in eastern Canada around plantations based on bound labor. “These were settlements of indentured servants, primarily Irish, many of them very young...abducted from Ireland by either force or guile and brought to the south shore of Newfoundland where they were literally sold to fishing masters,” Seaweed recounts.

For the servants, life in the settlements was marked by exhausting work and routine public punishments, including floggings and worse, for infractions of rules.

Joining together and escaping their bondage in the fishing and processing village of Ferryland around 1750, some of the unwilling newcomers formed what became known as the Society of Masterless Men, which persisted for fifty years by some accounts, a hundred by others.

In time, the breakaway group, which included women and children, became part of local lore and its members featured in a traditionally-told tale, despite a paucity of documentary evidence.

Yet the story is compelling. As we learn from Seaweed, “In 1774 a petition written by Bonavista [Newfoundland] merchants, justices of the peace, and others, was sent to Governor Shuldhham, complaining of a number of ‘masterless’

Irishmen who had gone to live in a secluded cove and 'were there building fishing rooms."

Beyond the usual portrayal of "outlaws," Seaweed and Sakolsky provide details and analysis that allow us to understand the Newfoundland rebels as builders of autonomous communities free from life in pre-industrial capital-

ist society.

Sakolsky stresses that the tale of the Masterless Men, "though it may not be based entirely on provable historical fact, reminds us that the poetic truths associated with myths of revolt can act as an antidote to despair even in times characterized by great pessimism."

Despair attacks the imagination,

pessimism (to the extent it spurs imagination) engenders resistance and revolt. To inform and inspire your pessimism, read this book.

Quincy B. Thorn lives in an undisclosed location and has no associations with social media.



A May 1968 poster calls for "Workers, immigrants and French, all unite." The boss is trying to keep them apart. This works as a necessity 50 years later.

May '68 Participants Look Back on the Events that Changed Their Lives Forever and Almost Changed France Completely

May Made Me: An Oral History of the 1968 Uprising in France
Mitchell Abidor
AK Press 2018 akpress.org

RUI PRETI

May *Made Me* joins thousands of other books published over the past fifty years dealing with the insurrectionary events in France during May and June 1968. Unfortunately, most of them are quite superficial, inaccurate, and often highly distorted by authoritarian presuppositions.

Mitchell Abidor's collection of interviews with people active during that tumultuous time offers a relatively broad range of perspectives, most from people on the non-authoritarian Marxist left, as well as some anarchists. It also includes a few interviews with participants friendly to trotskyist or even stalinist ideas.

The author explains in his acknowledgements that although several respondents can converse in English, he conducted most of the interviews in French in order to allow the participants to express their views with as much complexity and nuance as they wished.

The people Abidor spoke with came from varying backgrounds and described different aspects of the struggle. The book contains interviews with 16 men and nine women. Their ages at the time ranged from 15 to 46 years, with the average in the mid-twenties. The vast majority were politically involved to some extent before the May days. Five identified themselves as anarchists. Seventeen were high school or university students. Eleven of the respondents were working at the time of the events.

A WEALTH OF INFORMATION IS OFFERED about their varying experiences and points of view. But some of Abidor's questions are colored by his belief that the perspectives and activities of the French Communist Party and the party-dominated union confederation, the CGT, did not significantly contribute to the stifling of social possibilities. This, despite what many anarchists and other participants and later analysts contend.

Several of his questions are aimed at eliciting responses confirming that the majority of workers were not generally interested in social revolution, only wanting improvements in working conditions, pay, and other job benefits. While this was generally recognized by most witnesses, it doesn't prove Abidor's contention that the workers were not held back from autonomous action by the party and union bureaucrats.

Several of the anarchists and others said they weren't discouraged by the initial lack of coordination between students and workers, believing that social possibilities develop during insurrections no matter where the political and social-consciousness of anyone (workers or students) might be at the outset.

Abidor repeatedly asked if respondents believed that events would amount to anything beyond protests, since the



May '68 The Beginning of a Prolonged Struggle

This poster and others throughout the issue are from the many that appeared in Paris during May/June 1968.

majority of workers did not connect with the radical students. Many responded that they did not think a revolution was underway. Those who held onto the belief that the working class was the only valid revolutionary agent, especially the stalinists, expected the least of the insurgency.

Nevertheless, most of those interviewed felt their participation in the events had a significant impact on the rest of their lives to some degree. It shaped their ongoing passion for social involvement. The vast majority stayed engaged in some way, including by pursuing academic, media, or cultural occupations. But some participants' choices seem incongruous. A few became union bureaucrats, choosing to work for societal reform through the Communist-dominated unions (without necessarily endorsing all positions), even as the influence of the party drastically shrank.

THE RESPONDENTS ALL AGREED that the '68 insurgency "freed up French life, removed sexual and social constraints, and opened the door to feminism and gay rights."

One of the anarchists interviewed put it this way: "Everyone questioned him or herself, from the far right to the far left; everyone put themselves in question. . . Though not in the same sense. . . There are some who changed, some who didn't, but it caused ideas to change. . . it couldn't have been predicted and we never thought things would happen like this. It gave us a lot of hope, and if it happened then it could happen again."

Jean-Pierre Duteuil, an anarchist activist in the May events, not interviewed in this book, asserts that despite the return of the repressive order, the experiences of that time should be acknowledged as revolutionary because of the deep egalitarian political critique of authority that was at play in all realms of life.

But for some other respondents the return to a semblance

of normality proves capital's ability to absorb shocks and to adapt to new situations.

May Made Me does not resolve ongoing questions about how to understand and learn from what happened in France during those months in 1968, but it makes a valuable contribution to the discussion.

Rui Preti is a long-time friend of the *Fifth Estate* and a great believer in the value of continuous questioning.



Application deadline: November 7, 2018 for May 2019 Festival

The 14th annual Montreal International Anarchist Theatre Festival, the world's only event dedicated to anarchist theatre, seeks plays, monologues, dance-theatre, puppet shows, mime, in English and French, on the theme of anarchism or related themes such as opposition to all forms of oppression including the State, capitalism, war, and patriarchy. Also, pieces exploring ecological, social and economic justice, racism, feminism, poverty, class and gender oppression from an anarchist perspective. We welcome work from anarchist and non-anarchist writers.

Application form/guidelines: anarchisttheatrefestival.com

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A modern day David against Goliath during April/May protests at the Gaza/Israel border. Israeli army murdered 110 Palestinians; wounding 14,000.

In the Skin of a Lion (1987)
The English Patient (1993)
Michael Ondatje

Some people read novels solely for a good story. Others also want quality writing that flows well and doesn't distract from the storyline. For me, if the novel reflects my values, all the better, but this is not a criterion.

Authors Cara Hoffman and Lola Lafon's novels (some reviewed in the FE) are well-written and reflect the values promoted in this paper. But as Lola Lafon said during a discussion organized by L'Insoumise, the anarchist bookstore in Montreal, "I write novels, not tracts." And, I want to read novels, not propaganda.

Two novels, *In the Skin of a Lion* and *The English Patient*, by Sri Lankan-born, Canadian author Michael Ondatje, are superbly written.

Wait! Don't say, "I saw the movie version of latter film." Movies can never reflect the complexity of a novel, and one misses the beautiful writing. There are some of the same characters in both novels, so they should be read, if possible, one after the other, starting with *Skin of a Lion*. They reflect our values, *The English Patient* more subtly until the end, and the nation-state is denounced more than once in this novel, as is war.

Other novels that are interestingly written that reflect our values include *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver, *The Old Man Who Read Love Novels* by Luis Sepulveda, and *Dreams of my Russian Summers* by Andrai Makine, unfortunately the only one of his novels to be translated into English (they were written in French and translated into many other languages). Of course, the list of worthwhile titles is endless.

—S. Laplage

25 Years Ago in the Fifth Estate

Blood and Soil Ideologies

Little has changed in Palestine since 1993



The following is an excerpt from an article commenting on the 1993 Palestine Liberation Organization/Israel peace agreement, "The PLO/Israeli Treaty: Another Defeat for the Palestinians." —from the Fifth Estate, Fall/Winter 1993.

E.B. Maple (Peter Werbe and George Bradford (David Watson))

Few realize that in the 45 years of Israeli existence, fewer than 700 Israeli civilians have been killed by Palestinian guerrillas. In the same period, Israel has slaughtered tens of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians (including scores of children whose "crime" was throwing stones), wiped out 400 villages, imprisoned thousands without trial, dynamited houses, cut down thousands of trees in orchards, and engaged in collective punishment in an attempt to terrorize the "natives" into submission.

To anyone clear-headed enough to notice such hideous historic ironies, all of this starkly evokes the Nazi policy of ten-to-one retaliation, though in many aspects it is the same policy pursued throughout history by all expansionist empires based on blood-and-soil ideologies. A Jewish nationalist statism inevitably had to turn out to be as foul and irrational as all the others.

So insane became the Israeli attempts to repress signs of that other nationalism in the occupied territories that their policy of forbidding the display of the Palestinian flag led youth in the Gaza strip to taunt Israeli soldiers with slices of watermelon which contained the red and green colors of their flag. For this violation they often met the same fate as those engaging in more militant acts.

Despite the poignant images of celebrating Jewish and Palestinian crowds the Accord, peace and reconciliation appear to be as remote as ever. It was rather the sagging fortunes of the PLO, coupled with the desperation of an Israeli state plagued by economic stagnation, political crisis, and a relentless cycle of polarization and violence, that compelled both camps to sign a treaty which is so problematic it may never get off the ground. When one considers the model of Bosnia, the authentic human choice of dropping all borders and creating a secular, multi-ethnic, classless community seems even less possible. Outside of the PLO and the Israeli state machinery there exist glimmers of communities and projects paying allegiance to neither racket.

It is there where the only hope lies.



VOTING I

Thank you for finally calling out your fellow privileged white lefties for their, "I choose not to vote," bullshit. (See "In Defense of Tactical Voting," by Bill Weinberg, Spring 2018.)

The Sentence Reform and Control Act bill that was pending in Congress, with wide bi-partisan support when the 2016 presidential election went down, would have taken five years off my prison sentence the day Hillary signed it (as she most certainly would have), along with that amount and much more from numerous friends of mine in this scumfuck system.

I don't know anyone in these places (aside from the oddball, toothless meth-Nazi) who didn't want you people out there to vote for that miserable, racist woman regardless of her shortcomings. In fairness, a 3-million person majority of you did, and many thanks.

But, yeah, it must be nice to not have years of your life hanging over your head relative to a presidential election, but there are several thousand of us in the fed system for whom that was and remains the case.

People who call themselves prison abolitionists and bump all this fly-shit about "fire to the prisons," but then turn around and ignore an opportunity to help thousands of prisoners get out many years sooner because in so doing they will somehow have "legitimized the system," are just clueless, bougie assholes striking a pose.

Leo Olàdimù
US Prison Hazelton
Bruceton Mills, W.V.

Bill Weinberg replies: To be clear: We should be putting forth the idea of prison abolition, and not be content

with the few crumbs of progress offered by the system. But we should also be pragmatic and take what we can get, and not be more concerned with our ideological purity than human lives.

Readers may have heard that Trump has pledged to sign a prison reform act that could free thousands. We should be clear that this bill, the "First Step Act" (named to reflect its modest ambitions), is not the same as the Sentencing Reform Act, which now appears dead.

The First Step Act would allow prisoners to finish their sentences in a halfway house or under home confinement if they complete education, job training, and drug treatment programs while behind bars. But it does not include actual sentence reductions.

Which is why the ACLU and NAACP are opposing it.

VOTING II

Regarding Bill Weinberg's article in the Spring 2017 Fifth Estate, "In Defense of Tactical Voting With No Illusions." Who exactly were we supposed to vote for? Hillary Clinton?

Looking back on the first two terms of her dynasty we find support for actions against the Zapatistas, escalation of the Drug War, and for tough anti-crime legislation.

Weinberg wrote about the Zapatistas and for *High Times* during the Bill Clinton administration.

He should know better.

Isabel d/Nihil
Albany N.Y.

Bill Weinberg replies: Not only did I write about the Zapatistas for *High Times*, I wrote a book about them (*Homage to Chiapas: The New Indigenous Struggles in Mexico*, Verso Books 2000).

Nothing I wrote suggested that the Democrats and neoliberals are not our enemies. On the contrary, I was explicitly clear that they are. But sweeping they're-all-the-same-ism is deluded, ahistorical nonsense.

The neoliberal order paved the way for Trump-fascism by fueling a backlash against globalism ripe for a demagogue like Trump to exploit. But arguments that fascism is no more dangerous than liberalism (neo or old-school) are not to be taken seriously.

It certainly is not the position of the Zapatistas. They have always maintained their independence from electoral parties (exactly the stance I advocate), but have not advocated abstentionism, and have even allowed polling in their zones of control.

TRUMP I

There is something peculiar about your article, "Is Trump the 'Punk' President?" by Brian James Schill in your Spring 2018 issue.

Schill writes that punk and anarchist anti-fascism are "the only force equipped to combat fascism at the street level." What?

A 50-year-old music genre is "the only force" that can save us? I'm sorry but as much as I like punk music, I can't give it this much credit and I believe that art and music actually matter.

Is he proposing that a conspiracy is working to invalidate punk?

The alt-right partially developed out of internet forums like 4-Chan which

often specializes in being as obnoxious and offensive as possible. There has always been an element in punk, as well, of adopting offensive, reactionary positions as a Rorschach test. Fear did this long ago as satire, in a way similar to GWAR.

Some non-satirical boneheaded aspects of punk include The Eaters (a '77 UK band) who released the single, "Get Raped," and large sections of the Boston hardcore scene were and are similarly boneheaded.

The problem with transgression and shock tactics is that they can function like passive nihilism leaving a terrain that can be reterritorialized by reactionary ideologies.

Jason Rodgers
Albany N.Y.

Brian James Schill replies: Thanks for reading, Jason. In retrospect, I can appreciate the critique that including "punk" in that sentence about punk and anarchist antifa being the "only force equipped to combat fascism at the street level" is problematic.

So, strike "punk" from that sentence. My point was that aside from the various—and important—women's marches since DT took office, there has been little by way of street-level resistance to the current administration's agenda in the US outside of the organized antifa movement, which contains many self-identified punks.

But, yes, much of punk is right of center, and we cannot escape the fact that there are ways in which DT is "punk" tactically, as the dudes at trumpispunkrock.com argue.

I suppose you could add the incredibly important NoDAPL movement that occurred before DT was in office in North Dakota in 2016 as a site of resistance, but the resistance there was less the DT agenda specifically than neoliberalism and multinational capitalism generally.

To the DT-is-punk point, then, the bigger question is, as you imply, if punk is now in the White House, then punk



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& handwritten.
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either won, or if DT is not punk, then punk was already ineffectual as a resistance movement. That is, 40+ years of resistance to neoliberalism, etc., still couldn't stop Hillary, Trump, LePen, climate change, and so on.

In either case, it's hard not to draw the conclusion that punk should just go away, that it is and has been dead for a long time.

As Rimbaud, and, I guess, Refused, put it, "We need new noise."

TRUMP II

The world decries the Trump presidency. The American democratic process, sick with multiple infections of plutocracy, kleptocracy, and stupidity, teetering on wobbly legs, bought into Trump's brash, clownish, populism.

Grasping at the straws that perhaps here was a man who could change the course and restore power to the people. Pollyannas. Dumb Shits. Now, look what they've got. But as bad as things are, watch out folks, it's gonna get worse.

Trump is too volatile and stands a strong chance of imploding. Even if his term doesn't go down in flames, his re-election is highly, highly doubtful. He's pissed off way too many fat cats who call the shots and failed to construct a political Pretorian Guard.

Yes, his darling, the Military Industrial Complex, has received kisses and hugs from Trump, but these bad hombres are fickle, and they well know about shoving lose cannons over the side.

No doubt they're already audition-

ing for the real thing. Trump is just the opening act, the funny man who warms up the audience. The main attraction is on his or her way.

This one will have charm, intelligence, large hands and quite possibly a host of brown-shirts.

Gary Ives
Marble Falls, Ark.

TRANS NAME CHANGE

Along with the Austin Community Law Center and the Trans Pride Initiative, I am mounting a constitutional challenge to a Texas statute prohibiting incarcerated people from changing their names.

This statute has no rational purpose, but functions to disproportionately impact incarcerated trans people.

If we prevail in Texas, we will mount similar challenges to the many other states with similar prohibitions. A positive outcome for those who wish to adopt gender-affirming names will benefit those who wish to change their names for religious or other personal reasons.

Our approach to this litigation is not only to challenge the state prohibition, but to de-pathologize the discourse that prevails in legal writing about trans people. We believe this litigation will yield positive results, regardless of the outcome at the trial court level, and are prepared to fight this battle in the courts for as long as it takes to get legal recognition of the basic right to self-determination via control of your own name.

We are raising a modest amount of money to cover things like filing fees, and medical testimony. Our goal is \$5,000.

Here is a link to our fundraising page. 103.tpride.org. Your support, including sharing this link on your social media, is greatly appreciated by us and our clients.

Moira Meltzer-Cohen
Attorney at Law
New York. N.Y.

RNC 2000 to Trump

Continued from Page 23

They and their comrades had good support from civil rights lawyers and their comrades on the outside were organized to provide support as long as a single activist was inside.

R2K Legal got busy raising bail, raising more funds, publicizing police and jail abuses, developing a media strategy, and building a movement to drop the charges. When the district attorney and mayor stood their ground, the collective and its attorneys worked to organize trial trainings and push for pre-trial dismissals, some of which were obtained.

They researched and exposed the spectacularly biased judge who heard many of the cases and (unsuccessfully) tried to get him recused. "While it was a long-short legal strategy," the recusal effort "became a political success story" by "giving the public a glimpse into the style of justice that gets meted out every day" in cities like Philadelphia, Hermes writes.

One felony arrestee, activist Kate Sorenson, was found to have been subjected to months of police surveillance and harassment prior to the RNC. She was acquitted. Ultimately, fewer than 20 of the over 400 arrestees were convicted, and none was sentenced to jail time.

The police abuses provoked a rash of civil lawsuits, resulting in settlements by the city amounting to \$18 million (disclosure: this writer was deposed in one of the civil cases.) The monetary awards aside, was it worth it?

Sometimes, civil litigation exposes crimes by the authorities and results in some measure of reform; on the other hand, the process is long and exhausting and taxes the limited resources of

legal collectives and their allies, surely one of the aims of the State.

Yet, activists refined their skills at jail and court solidarity and took them to other cities and street-level protests, including actions over the Iraq war and at later political conventions.

Crashing the Party is thorough—perhaps too exhaustive for many readers—but the record Hermes compiles is an indispensable part of our experience as activists against the State.

He doesn't neglect the vast expansion of surveillance by police, the FBI, joint terrorism task forces, and other agencies as a result of Seattle, the RNC, and

Protest is ratcheting up, but so is repression.

other mass mobilizations, when law enforcement branded anarchists and "summit hoppers" the nucleus of a new domestic terrorism.

All that expanded vastly after 9/11 and the formulation of the War on Terror. But the State response to the RNC protests undoubtedly was a watershed in making the use of its resources to suppress dissent, often at the behest of private interests, commonplace. Recent example: the suppression of the Dakota Access Pipeline protest community at Standing Rock.

The great question since the RNC has remained much the same: how to join mass protests, often by white radicals, more firmly and productively with existing local activism in communities of color and among impoverished populations.

Hermes makes a strong case that the real legacy of R2K is the proliferation of legal collectives over the succeeding

decade, from *Midnight Special* in Oakland to the People's Law Collective and the Sylvia Rivera Law Project in New York City.

These groups not only help arrestees to better leverage their position in the jails and courts, but to use those contexts to extend their activism and build ties to other victims of the system, something a more fragmented legal strategy, dictated by conventional defense attorneys, can't accomplish.

Donald Trump and Jeff Sessions, his attorney general, are embarked on



a vast (and underreported) project to harden the criminal injustice system and heighten suppression of disfavored communities.

Protest, accordingly, is ratcheting up, but so is repression. "The likelihood of the state conceding to protester demands depends on the amount of political pressure that movements can muster," Hermes concludes.

A strategy for carrying activism onto the criminal injustice system's own turf is more important than ever. Kris Hermes's fine book shows us how legal collectives can continue to play a vital role.

Eric Laursen is an anarchist writer and activist living in Buckland, Mass. His most recent book is *The Duty to Stand Aside: Nineteen Eighty-Four and the Wartime Quarrel of George Orwell and Alex Comfort* (AK Press, 2018).

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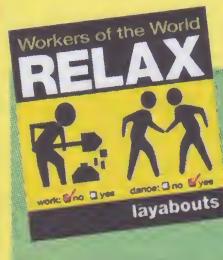
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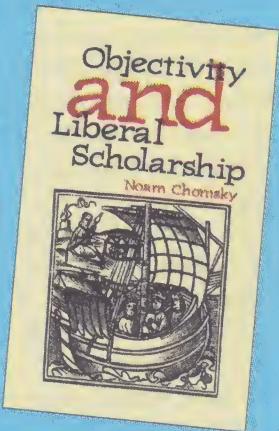
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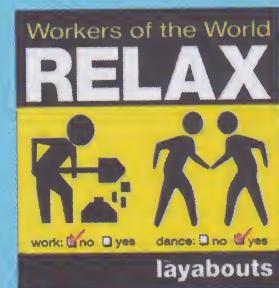
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